(Allah praises and grants peace upon the Prophet)
(Salla Allahu (sa) alihi wa sallam)

Allah is the Arabic word for the Creator
Islam is the Arabic word for submission to Allah

THE MILLENNIUM BIOGRAPHY OF MUHAMMAD THE PROPHET OF ALLAH

by

Grand Shaykh, Professor Hasan Qaribullah
Dean of Umm Durman Islamic University and Sammania Grand Shaykh

Grand Muhaddith Master Abdullah Ben Sadek

Shaykha Anne Khadijah Darwish

Shaykh Ahmad Darwish
Shaykh Qaribulla USA Personal Secretary
The Founder of the Mosque of the Internet

Reviewed in part by

Former manager of Muhammad Ali

Please email it to friends and family
Available in palm, word and web formats

Converted to HTML format by

Bill McLean
www.mclean.faithweb.com
bill@mclean.faithweb.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

YOU, THE READER AND HERACLIUS, EMPEROR OF ROME HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON

The authors were unable to find a more eloquent preface to this millennium biography than a letter sent by the Prophet to his contemporary the Emperor Heraclius. In reply, Heraclius commenced an imperial investigative effort to cross examine the current Prophethood. In the year 610 CE, Heraclius, succeeded Phocas as Emperor of Rome. His empire flourished and extended as far west as the Danube in Europe, and included all the countries on the Mediterranean coast. It also included the Balkans of which Turkey with its famed city Constantinople, named after the Emperor Constantine was a jewel in the crown of the Roman empire, and many of the Arab countries surrounding Arabia. As part of his prophetic duty Prophet Muhammad (sa) invited Heraclius to Islam and in response Heraclius decided to

examine Prophet Muhammad. By exploring this book you are, by default, examining Prophet Muhammad (sa) and this what is meant by referring to the reader as having something in common with Heraclius. Prophet Muhammad (sa) sent his messenger, Dihyah Al Kalbi to the governor of Bostra with a letter for Heraclius inviting him to Islam saying:

PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S LETTER TO HERACLIUS

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful. From: The Prophet of Allah To: Heraclius, the greatest of Romans Peace be upon those who follow Divine Guidance. I therefore invite you to embrace Islam. Surrender to Allah and live in peace. Allah will doubly reward you, but if you turn away, the sin of the Arians will rest upon you." Then he quoted the Koran:

'Say: People of the Book! (Jews, Nazarenes and Christians) let us come to a common word between us and you, that we will worship none except Allah, that we will associate none with Him, and that none of us take others for lords beside Allah.' If they turn away, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims' Koran 3:64

IMPERIAL, INVESTIGATIVE CROSS EXAMINATION OF THE PROPHETHOOD

A peace treaty was in effect between the Prophet (sa) and the hostile tribe of Koraysh. Abu Sufyan, its chieftain, one of the most bitter enemies of Islam knew that on account of the peace treaty he could rely upon the safe passage of his caravan to trade in far away Syria (Ash-Sham). Heraclius had many questions he wanted answered. When he learned that a Koraysh caravan from Mecca was now in the vicinity, he sent a rider with a message to the caravaners saying he wished them to accompany his rider back to Jerusalem so that he may speak with them. As Abu Sufyan and his caravan journeyed to Jerusalem, he wondered why the Emperor of Rome had sent for him but he didn't have to wait long. As soon as they reached Jerusalem, Abu Sufyan and his companions were presented to Heraclius and his court whereupon Heraclius called for an interpreter and inquired about Prophet Muhammad (sa). He asked Abu Sufyan and his companions who amongst them was closest to the Prophet (sa) in kinship. Abu Sufyan replied that it was he and told him that the Prophet (sa) hailed from a noble lineage. Then, Heraclius turned to his companions and said, "If he says something you know to be contradictory, you must speak." Heraclius' questions were direct, he asked Abu Sufyan if any of his tribe had ever before claimed to be a prophet whereupon Abu Sufyan replied that none had. Then he asked if any of his ancestors had been a king and Abu Sufyan replied that they had not. Heraclius was interested to know what kind of people followed the Prophet (sa) and if their numbers were increasing or decreasing. Abu Sufyan told him that they were poor people and that their numbers were increasing. Then, Heraclius asked if he knew of anyone of his followers had reverted to their old religion, and Abu Sufyan replied that he knew of none. Referring to the Prophet's character Heraclius asked Abu Sufyan if he had ever known the Prophet (sa) to lie, or if he had ever betrayed or broken his word, whereupon

Abu Sufyan replied no to all counts, then, referring to the latter Abu Sufyan commented in a tone of resentment, "We have a treaty with him, but we do not know what he will do." Heraclius asked next if they had ever fought against the Prophet (sa) and if so to tell him about the outcome. Abu Sufyan replied that they had fought; sometimes they had been victorious and upon other occasions victory belonged to the Prophet (sa). Then, Heraclius inquired about his teachings whereupon Abu Sufyan told him that the Prophet (sa) ordered his followers to worship Allah alone and not to associate anything with Him, and to renounce the idols their forefathers had worshipped. Abu Sufyan continued to tell him that the Prophet (sa) also ordered them to pray, not to lie, to be chaste and to foster kindred relationship.

THE WITNESSING TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SA)

From these answers Heraclius derived his opinion of the Prophet (sa) saying, "All the prophets came from noble families, I asked you if anyone before him from your tribe claimed to be a prophet and your reply was no. If your reply had affirmed it then I would have deduced he was mimicking that man. I asked if any of your ancestors had been a king, you replied they had not. If your answer had been otherwise I would have assumed that he wanted to reclaim his ancestral kingdom. When I asked if he lied, you replied that he did not, so I wondered how a person who does not lie could ever tell a lie about Allah. I also asked you about his followers, whether they were rich or poor and you replied they were poor -- the followers of all the prophets were poor. When I asked if his followers were increasing or decreasing, you replied increasing; this is the course of true belief. Then, I asked if there was anyone, who, after embracing Islam recanted and you replied that you knew of none; this is another sign of belief as it enters the heart. When I asked you if he had ever been known to betray, you replied that he had not; this is the way of all prophets. Then I asked you what he ordered his followers to do, and you told me that he orders that Allah alone is to be worshipped, and forbade the worship of idols. Then you told me that he orders you to pray, speak the truth, and be chaste. If what you say is true, he will, in the near future occupy this seat." Then Heraclius told Abu Sufyan: "I knew he was about to appear, but did not know he would be from you. If I could meet him I would wash his feet with water." Then Heraclius called for the letter the Prophet (sa) had sent him while before and read it aloud whereupon there was a sudden outcry from the court and Abu Sufyan and his companions were thrown out onto the street. As soon as they were able to pull themselves together Abu Sufyan told his companions, "He has become so prominent that even the King of the light-skinned Byzantine people is afraid of him!" and knew in his heart that it would not be long until the Prophet (sa) conquered. Abu Sufyan was a proud man and his reputation mattered greatly to him and was heard to say in the years to come, "By Allah, if it were not for the fact that I would have been ashamed that my companions would label me as a liar, I would not have told the truth."

INTRODUCTION

ARCH ANGEL GABRIEL'S DISCRIPTION OF THE PRINCIPALS OF ISLAM:

Omar, the son of Khattab narrated, "We were sitting with the Holy Prophet (sa) one day, when an unknown man appeared to us. His clothes were brilliantly white, his hair jet black but there was no sign of traveling upon him.

1. SUBMISSION TO ALLAH (ISLAM)

He sat down in front of the Prophet (sa) and their knees touched. Placing his hands on his thighs he said, 'Prophet Muhammad (sa) tell me about Islam.' The Prophet (sa) replied, 'Islam is that you bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger, and that you establish the prayer, pay the obligatory charity, fast the month of Ramadan, and make the Pilgrimage to the House (Ka'ba) if you can afford it.' Then to our surprise the man confirmed the correctness of the answer saying, 'That is right.'

2. FAITH AND BELIEF (IMAN)

Then the man said, 'Tell me about faith.' To this the Prophet (sa) replied, ' It is that you believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and that you believe in predestination.'

3. SPIRITUAL PERFECTION (IHSAN, ISLAMIC SUFISM)

Again the man said, 'That is right, now tell me about perfection.' The Prophet (sa) replied, 'It is that you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you do not see Him, know that He is watching you.' The man asked again, 'Tell me about the Hour of Judgement.' The Prophet (sa) replied, 'He who is being asked knows no more about it than the one who asks.' So the man asked, 'Tell me about some of the signs of its approach.' To this the Prophet (sa) replied, 'The female slave will give birth to her master, and the bare-footed, naked, penniless goat-herders will live arrogantly in high mansions.' The man departed, and I remained for a while. The Prophet (sa) asked me, 'Omar, do you know who the inquirer was?' I replied, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' So he told me, 'It was Gabriel who came to teach you your Religion.'"

CHAPTER 1 PROPHET ABRAHAM AND THE FIRST HOUSE OF ALLAH ON EARTH

Prophet Abraham was born to honorable parents descended from Prophet Noah. He was born in the city of Hara, Iraq during the reign of King Nimrod and is often referred to as "The Friend of Allah" and "The Father of the Prophets". Before Abraham reached maturity his father passed away, and as was the custom in those days, he would, out of respect for his paternal uncle, refer to him as his father. There had been a void in guidance since the death of Prophet Noah and the people of Hara reverted to idolatry. Hara was renowned for its ornate, pagan temples and its citizens took great pride in the idols housed within them. Offerings were

sacrificed to the idols and ritual ceremonies, wishfully invoking their favors performed before them. A lucrative commerce had grown around the activities of the temples. Carved replicas of the idols were a much sought after possession and it was to this profession that Azar, Abraham's uncle, whom he now called "father" directed his talents.

WHO IS MY LORD

Abraham was unlike his contemporaries, he grew to be an upright, caring, young man repulsed by idol worship and sought the answer to a question that had consumed him for many years -- who was his Lord? In the process of his guidance, Allah in His Mercy caused Abraham to contemplate upon the kingdoms of the heavens and earth. One evening, as he gazed up into the night sky, he saw a planet shinning more brightly than the others and exclaimed, "This is surely my Lord!" but, as the morning light came the planet set he rejected his thought saying, "I do not like the setting ones!" On another occasion as he saw the moon rise he said once again, "This is my Lord!" But like the planet as the light of the morning broke it disappeared whereupon he said, "If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be amongst the astray nation!" Then, when he saw the sun rise upon the horizon he said, "This must be my Lord, it is larger!" But as it set he turned to his people saying, "O nation I am quit of what you associate (with Allah, the Creator) I have turned my face to Him who created the heavens and the earth, uprightly, and I am not among the idolaters!" Koran, Chapter 6 verses 76-79

ABRAHAM IS CHOSEN BY ALLAH AND BECOMES A PROPHET

Shortly after this Allah sent the Arch Angel Gabriel to inform Abraham that He had chosen him to be His Messenger. Abraham was deeply humbled by the news and Gabriel brought him, over a period of forty-two visits, ten Holy Scrolls. Prophet Muhammad informed his companions later on that the contents of the Scrolls were examples. Abraham's open rejection of idolatry caused a commotion, no one had ever challenged the deity of the idols of Hara; to his fellow citizens the notion was deemed blasphemous. However, Abraham was resolved, he had no doubt that Allah was the only One to be worshipped because he was convinced that it was He alone who had created everything.

THE LOGIC OF ABRAHAM

Abraham tried reasoning with those around him in the best manner, but they refused to accept his logic even after he had drawn their attention to the obvious fact that their idols had either been hewn from stone or carved from wood by people such as themselves. Abraham never stopped challenging his people and asked if their idols could do anything else other than just stand motionless, year after year, in the same place -- the place in which they themselves had been positioned many years before! He reminded his people that the idols neither ate nor drank from the offerings placed before them nor could they harm or benefit anyone. But still the people refused to abandon their idolatry. Over the course of time the idolaters became

outraged and told Abraham that it was he who was wrong and that he must fear their gods. Abraham shook his head and asked, "And how should I fear what you have associated when you yourselves are not afraid that you have associated with Allah that which He did not send down for it upon you an authority.″ Koran, Chapter 6 verse 81

ABRAHAM AND KING NIMROD

The news of Abraham's preaching reached King Nimrod who considered himself to be a deity. Abraham feared no one except Allah, so when he was presented to the king he challenged him saying, "My Lord is He who revives and causes to die." But the artful king scoffed at Abraham and told him, "I revive and cause to die." The king knew exactly what Abraham meant, but had tired to outwit him with his reply by referring to the power he had as king to either spare the life of a guilty criminal, or put to death an innocent person -- whichever suited his whim. Abraham challenged him yet again saying, "Allah brings up the sun from the east, so you bring it from the west." This time the king knew he had been revealed and the color drained from his face, and Abraham waited to see if he would surrender to Allah but he did not and so Abraham returned home. Koran, Chapter 2 verse 258

ABRAHAM AND THE MIRACLE OF THE FOUR BIRDS

One day, Abraham asked Allah to show him how He revived the dead. Allah asked Abraham, "Haven't you believed?" Abraham told Him that it wasn't that, rather, it was just to satisfy his heart. So Allah told him to take four birds, sacrifice them, then cut them into pieces and mix their bits and pieces together then go to the neighboring hills and place some of the mixed pieces on each of them. Allah told Abraham that after he had done this to call the birds and their severed parts would reassemble and fly to him. Abraham did exactly as he was told, he sacrificed a peacock, an eagle, a crow and a rooster, then, after he had mixed their body parts together he placed them upon the neighboring hills, keeping only their heads with him. Once this had been done he called to them whereupon their mixed parts were brought back to life, reassembled, and flew to join themselves to their respective head that Abraham still held in his hand. Koran.

ABRAHAM AND HIS "FATHER″ PART COMPANY:

Now Azar was among those who refused to accept Allah as his Lord. Abraham asked him why he was so devoted to the idols but Azar could offer no better reply than to say that many people before him had worshipped them, and what was good enough for them was good enough for him also. Azar became upset and embarrassed by his nephew's preaching and threatened to stone him if he persisted. Such was Abraham's conviction that he did not stop preaching and after a while, Azar realized that his threats were of no use so he told his nephew he did not wish to see him again for sometime. As they parted company, tender-hearted Abraham told Azar he would ask Allah to forgive him, and that perhaps his Lord would

accept his prayer. Abraham continued to preach against the idols but the people continued to spurn what he had to say. After each refusal he would ask them the same question he had asked his uncle -- what made them so devoted to their idols -- but they replied in the same way, which was simply because their fathers and ancestors had worshipped them. Some even accused Abraham of jesting with them, but he swore that this was not so, and that without doubt their Lord and Creator is and always had been the Lord of all that is in the heavens and earth, and that they should abandon their useless idols.

ABRAHAM OUTWITS THE IDOLS

No matter how hard Abraham tried they would not accept the truth, so he told them, "By Allah, I shall outwit your idols as soon as you have turned your backs and gone." No one took Abraham seriously so they left and went about their business. Some time later, Abraham, unseen with ax in hand, entered the temple in which the most revered idols were housed, and smashed all except the largest into pieces then left unseen. It wasn't long before the idolaters returned to the temple and saw their gods lying broken into pieces on the floor. There was an outcry of horror and those who had heard Abraham's challenge immediately suspected him, and so he was summoned before them. "Abraham," they asked, "was it you who did this to our gods?" Abraham replied, "It was their great one that did it. Ask them if they can speak." The idolaters huddled together in a corner knowing well in their hearts the truth of the matter and that Abraham had at last succeeded in exposing the worthlessness of their idols. Begrudgingly, they admitted, "You know they do not speak." Thereupon Abraham challenged them saying, "Would you then worship that which can neither benefit nor harm you, instead of Allah? Shame on you and that you worship other than Allah! Have you no understanding?" Koran, Chapter 21:68

THE BONFIRE

It was more than the idolaters could bear, their idols lay broken in pieces unable to do anything for themselves. Outraged by the whole situation they cried out, "Burn him and help your gods!" The idolaters hastened to build a huge bonfire with the intent of burning Abraham to death, however, Abraham remained calm having complete trust in His Lord and did not flinch. There was nothing that would tear him away from his belief in the Oneness of Allah. Abraham was led to the bonfire and placed in its center, and the kindling wood lit. It wasn't long until the flames leapt high into the air -- but not even a single hair of Abraham's head was scorched. That was because Allah had caused a miracle to occur. He commanded the flames to be cool and safe for Abraham and eventually, when the fire had consumed itself, Abraham walked away unharmed praising and thanking Allah for His mercy. Even though the idolaters had witness this great miracle they continued in their arrogance and refused to abandon their idols. In their hearts they knew that nothing they did would ever harm Abraham because he was protected by Allah, so in desperation they banished him and his wife, Lady Sarah, from their homeland.

ABRAHAM AND SARAH IN EGYPT

After a long, tiring journey, Prophet Abraham and Lady Sarah reached Egypt and it was there they decided to make their home. During their time in Egypt, Haggar, one of the noble ladies-in-waiting in the court of Pharaoh, came to live in Abraham's household as a companion to Sarah. Haggar was a sweet natured lady, she loved Lady Sarah dearly and a very special friendship bonded them together. Idolatry was also commonplace in Egypt especially in the court of Pharaoh but when Haggar heard Abraham speak about Allah she was quick to recognize the truth and accepted it. In those days it was common place for a man to have more than one wife and Prophet Abraham and Lady Sarah, who were now elderly remained childless. Lady Sarah had given up hope of ever bearing a child so she suggested to Abraham that he might like to take Haggar to be her co-wife. Both Abraham and Haggar accepted her suggestion and shortly after Haggar became his lawful second wife. The family's wish was fulfilled when Lady Haggar conceived and gave birth to a fine son whom they named Ishmael. Lady Sarah was delighted and happy that Abraham had at long last been blessed with a son -- little did she know at that time that she too would be blessed in later years for her patience with a son of her own, Isaac.

DECEIT

Throughout the centuries nationalistic Jews and Orientalists have sort to distort the truth about Prophet Abraham’s legal marriage to Lady Haggar and the very close relationship between Ladies Sarah and Haggar. Their object has been and still is to undermine the great event which had been promised and recorded in the original, unadulterated Holy Scriptures that announced the coming of Islam with its protected revelation, the Holy Koran and the seal of all the prophets, Prophet Muhammad (sa).

PROPHETS OF ALLAH

Both the sons of Abraham were legitimate and destined to become prophets of Allah. Ishmael was sent as a prophet to the Arabs and Isaac as a prophet to the Hebrews, later on to be called the children of Israel and then Jews, peace be upon all the prophets. It is from the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac that two great nations evolved each having Prophet Abraham as their common ancestor. However, neither Jew nor Christian can claim he was a follower of their religion as both prophets Moses and Jesus were sent many centuries after the death of Prophet Abraham.

ABRAHAM AND HAGGAR IN BECCA, ARABIA

Before Ishmael completed his weaning, Prophet Abraham saw a vision in which he was instructed to take Lady Haggar and their son to a place called Becca, in the peninsular of Arabia, known today as Mecca, and leave them there. Mecca lies in a valley surrounded by

mountains and hills with three passes. One to the north, another to the south and the other to the west. The valley had long been one of the most traveled caravan routes in Arabia, however, it remained uninhabited largely because it lacked water. Upon reaching Becca, Prophet Abraham settled Lady Haggar and Ishmael under the shade of a large tree and gave his wife a large bag of dates and a water-skin full of water, then, turned away and started to leave them. Lady Haggar followed after him and asked, "Abraham, where are you going, are you leaving us in an uninhabited provisionless wilderness?" She asked the same question several times, but Abraham did not reply. Then, searching for a reason and knowing her husband would never do anything to earn the displeasure of Allah she inquired, "Has Allah commanded you to do this?" whereupon he replied, "Yes". So she comforted them both saying, "Then He will not let us perish," and returned to her infant.

ABRAHAM SUPPLICATES FOR LADY HAGGAR, ISHMAEL & FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MUSLIMS

At a place called Thania, Abraham stopped and turned his face in the direction of the ruins of Ka'ba -- the first House of Allah to be built on earth -- which lay buried in the sand. He raised his hands and supplicated,

"Our Lord, I have settled some of my offspring in a barren valley near Your Holy House; our Lord, in order that they establish the prayer. Make the hearts of people yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits, in order that they are thankful." Koran, Chapter 14 verse 37.

Allah had promised Abraham that from his offspring would arise great nations, that is why Abraham referred to having settled "some of his offspring" near Ka'ba. This promised was fulfilled as it was from the descendants of Prophet Ishmael that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon all the prophets, was born. Lady Haggar suckled her infant son and gave him water from the skin until none remained. It wasn't long until both were very thirsty but she was more concerned for Ishmael. Lady Haggar could not bear to have her son go without water so she searched frantically for some but could find none. In desperation she climbed a nearby hill, the hill of Safwa, and stood at its top and looked around in all directions to see if there was anyone in sight to help her -- but there was no one. She ran back down the hill and in her anxiety ran across the valley and climbed to the top of the neighboring hill of Marwah, but again to no avail. She ran between the two hills seven times, but could find neither caravaners nor water.

ALLAH HEARS THE CRY OF LADY HAGGAR

Upon the seventh time she reached the hill of Marwah Haggar heard a voice. She calmed herself and listened attentively, and called out, "I have heard Your voice, would that my supplication might reach You." And there, standing near the place we know today as Zamzam stood Angel Gabriel. Gabriel struck the ground with either his heel or wings, and water gushed

forth. Hastily, she dug a hole in the ground into which the water flowed and filled her water-skin to the top as the water gushed forth with still greater force. Quickly, she drank a handful of water and raced back to her son to give him some. Then, Gabriel spoke saying, "Do not be afraid of perishing here, because it is here that your son and his father will build a House for Allah. Allah will not let those around it perish."

THE RUINS OF KA'BA

In those days, the ruins of Ka'ba were elevated on a piece of land covered by sand in the shape of a mound, and when rain eventually fell it would run on either side.

THE CARAVANERS

Ishmael and his mother continued to live in Mecca by themselves until one day caravaners from the tribe of Jurhum returning from Kada'a, struck camp a little distance from the place where Lady Haggar had made her home. As the caravaners were unloading their camels they observed birds circling in the sky not far away. Their experience had taught them that birds circling in this manner might well indicate water. Ever hopeful of finding a fresh supply of water in that desolate region, they thought it was worth investigating, although from their past experience they had never found water anywhere in that area. Several tribesmen were sent to investigate. When they reached the place over which the birds circled, to their great surprise and joy they found the spring of Zamzam and returned quickly to tell their fellow travelers. Upon hearing the good news the caravaners stopped what they were doing and rushed to both see and drink the fresh water.

LADY HAGGAR MEETS THE JURHUM CARAVANERS

When they reached Zamzam, the caravaners found Lady Haggar standing nearby and asked her permission to strike camp near her. Lady Haggar agreed on condition that she retained the water rights and that her son would be the prince. The Jurhumites agreed and settled themselves in Becca whilst sending word to their families to come and join them there.

ANGELS DO NOT EAT

Meanwhile, one day, when Prophet Abraham was at home with Lady Sarah they were visited by strangers. It was not uncommon to find strangers visiting their home as each day Abraham would light a large bonfire on the top of a nearby mountain to attract and welcome travelers. Abraham’s generous hospitality was well known, no one was ever turned away and as such he hardly ever ate alone. His guests were always well fed and during the course of a much welcomed meal Abraham would take the opportunity to tell to his guests about Allah. One day, strangers arrived at his home, and as was his custom he arranged for a fine meal of a roasted calf to be prepared for his guests. The meal was set before them but his guests

declined to either eat or drink. Abraham was deeply trouble by this strange situation -- travelers were always hungry, or at least thirsty. Abraham's guests perceived his anxiety and told him not to be afraid because although they had taken the form of humans they were not humans as he supposed, rather, they were angels on their way to the city of his cousin Prophet Lot. Prophet Abraham felt at ease once more as he knew that angels, who are neither male nor female, and created from light, only worship Allah and do whatsoever they are ordered to do by Him. The angels proceeded to inform Abraham that the city of Prophet Lot, had become disobedient to Allah and were sexual perverts. The angels continued to tell him that it was because of this that Allah had ordered them to punish its people by utterly destroying both them and their city.

LADY SARAH BECOMES PREGNANT

As Lady Sarah entered the room, the angels told her that she would give birth to a son. She was overwhelmed by the news and clasped her hands on her cheeks in delight. She had been so happy when Lady Haggar gave birth to Ishmael several years before and now she too was to be blessed with a son of her own.

THE SEEDS OF ISHMAEL’S FORTHCOMING PROPHETHOOD

In His Wisdom, Allah had protected Ishmael in the harsh environment of the Holy Land in which he had matured. He had learned to speak Arabic in its purest, most eloquent form from the Jurhumites together with the art of horsemanship and had also become a highly skilled archer. The Jurhumites loved him, for his character was not only truthful and honorable but he was trustworthy and cared for their welfare; later on he was to marry from their tribe.

ISHMAEL, THE FIRST SACRIFICE

Despite his advanced years, Prophet Abraham would often journey to Mecca to visit Lady Hagar and his dearly beloved, eldest son, Ishmael who was now a young man. On one such visit Prophet Abraham saw a vision in which he was told to sacrifice his son for Allah. Soon after the vision shaytan came to Abraham and whispered, “How could you kill your beloved son?” Abraham instantly rejected and cursed shaytan, and in obedience to Allah went to Ishmael and said: "My son, I saw while sleeping that I shall sacrifice you, tell me what you think." It was time for shaytan’s second attempt to prevent the fulfillment of the vision and he whispered to Ishmael in a similar manner. Ishmael immediately rejected and cursed shaytan. Like his father, Ishmael’s love of Allah and obedience to Him was unquestionable and he replied: "Father, do as you are ordered (by Allah), Allah willing, you shall find me one of those who are steadfast." Koran, Chapter 37:102. Shaytan had failed twice, in his final attempt to prevent the fulfillment of the vision he went to Lady Hagar and whispered, “How could you let Abraham kill your only son?” But like her husband and son, she too loved Allah and was obedient to Him, and without hesitation she cursed and rejected shaytan.

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF ISHMAEL

Prophet Abraham took Ishmael to a quiet place far from the people. As Abraham prepared himself to sacrifice his beloved son for Allah, Ishmael, being a loving, caring young man and without thought for himself, asked his father for three things. He requested that he should be permitted to face the ground so that his father would not see his eyes and then be overcome with mercy towards him, and disobey to command of Allah. Ishmael also feared for the safety of his father so he requested him to sit upon his shoulders so that if he struggled when the knife struck him he would not injure him. He knew his mother would be sad so his final request was to ask his father to give her his shirt to console her. It was time, Prophet Abraham tried to slit the back of his son's neck three times, but on each occasion the blade was prevented from penetration. After the third attempt, Allah called out to Abraham saying, "O Abraham, you have confirmed your vision.′ As such We recompense the good-doers. That was indeed a clear trial. So, we ransomed him with a mighty sacrifice.″ Koran, Chapter 37 verse 104-107 Later on, Prophet Muhammad, (sa) said referring to Prophet Ishmael and his own father Abdullah whose life was ransomed by the slaying of a hundred camels: "I am the son of the two sacrifices." When Prophet Muhammad (sa) revived the pilgrimage many centuries later, three stone pillars were erected outside Mecca en route to Arafat as a reminder of the three whisperings of shaytan to Prophets Abraham, Ishmael and Lady Hagar. These three pillars are cursed and stoned by all those who make the pilgrimage.

THE UNGRATEFUL SPOUSE

Lady Hagar had passed away before Prophet Abraham's next visit to Becca. When he reached the valley he made his way to Ishmael's home but when he found he was not at home he started to look for an object he left behind on a previous visit. Soon after Ishmael's wife returned, she showed him no respect, neither did she welcome him, nor was she hospitable to her elderly visitor. Abraham asked her where her husband was whereupon she told him he was away hunting. He then inquired about their life and circumstances but rather than being grateful, she told him things were difficult then proceeded to complain about everything in their life. Ishmael's hunting expedition took longer than expected and so Abraham, who had been made unwelcome, decided it was time to leave. Before he left he asked Ishmael’s wife to give her husband a message saying, "When your husband returns, convey my greetings of peace to him and tell him that he should change the threshold of his door." A while after Abraham's departure Ishmael returned and sensed something unusual had happened during his absence, so he asked his wife if there had, in his absence, been any visitors. She told him of the elderly man that had stopped by and how he had asked about his whereabouts and their welfare. Ishmael asked if the visitor had left a message whereupon she told him that he had sent him greetings of peace and told him to change the threshold of his door. Upon hearing this Ishmael told his wife that the elderly gentleman was none other than his father and that he had directed him to divorce her. So Ishmael divorced his wife, and, as was his nature, treated her fairly and caused her no harm, and she returned to her people. Ishmael

was loved by the Jurhumites and when he decided to remarry from their tribe they were delighted.

THE GRATEFUL SPOUSE

After a period of time Prophet Abraham returned to visit his son but once again he did not find Ishmael at home. He asked his new wife where he was and she told him that he had gone out to search for provisions and prepared a meal her visitor. As before, he asked Ishmael's wife about their circumstances but unlike the previous wife she praised Allah and told him they were comfortable. Abraham then inquired about their food whereupon she told him that they ate meat and drank water. Then, Prophet Abraham supplicated, "O Allah, bless their meat and water." Before leaving, Abraham asked her to convey the greetings of peace to Ishmael but this time he left instructions to strengthen the threshold. Soon after Ishmael returned and once again sensed something unusual so he inquired if there had been any visitors during his absence. His wife told him of the elderly gentleman and spoke kindly about him. Ishmael asked if he had said anything to her, she told him that he had inquired about their well-being and that she had replied everything was well. She also told him that the elderly gentleman had asked her to convey his greetings of peace to him and said that he was to strengthen the threshold of his house. Ishmael smiled, and told his wife that the elderly gentleman was none other than his father, Abraham, and that she was the "threshold" he had ordered him to keep. In the years that followed, Ishmael had twelve children, and it is from his son Kidar that many Arabs are descended.

RAISING THE HOUSE OF ALLAH

Time passed, and the next time Prophet Abraham came to visit Ishmael he found him sitting under a large tree near the spring of Zamzam repairing his arrows. As soon as he saw his father he stood up and they greeted each other affectionately with peace. After the greetings, Abraham told his son that Allah had given him another command -- the command to rebuild Ka'ba, the Holy Mosque of Allah. When Abraham asked Ishmael if he would help him fulfill his task he felt highly honored and accepted whereupon Abraham pointed to a mound of large stones and to its surrounding area and told him that it was the place where Allah had commanded him to raise the foundations of the Holy Mosque. Soon the rebuilding of Ka'ba was underway, Ishmael picked up the large stones, handed them to Abraham, who then positioned them to form a roofless cubic house with its corners pointing to the north, south, east and west. During its rebuilding, an angel came to them bearing a black stone that had lain on Abu Kubays, a nearby hill, ever since it had been brought from Paradise many, many centuries before. And so it was that Prophet Abraham positioned the Black Stone at the eastern corner of the Ka'ba. Many centuries later, their descendant, Prophet Muhammad, (sa) told his companions that when the stone was brought from Paradise it was whiter than milk, but, on account of the many sins committed by the children of Adam, it had changed color.

Once Ka'ba had been rebuilt, Abraham and Ishmael supplicated, "O our Lord, accept this from us. You are the Hearer, the Knower. Our Lord, make us both submissive (Muslims) to You, and of our descendants a submissive nation to You. Show us our (pilgrimage) rites, and accept (repentance from) us. You are the Receiver (of repentance), the Merciful. Our Lord, send among them (the inhabitants of this House) a Messenger from them (Allah answered the supplication by sending Prophet Muhammad) who shall recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book (Al Koran) and wisdom (Prophetic sayings), and purify them. You are the Mighty, the Wise." Koran Chapter 2 verses 127 -129 with the explanation of Sawi.

Prophets Abraham and Ishmael asked for the acceptance of repentance on behalf of their descendants as they, like all prophets, were protected from sin.

PILGRIMAGE TO KA'BA IS ESTABLISHED

Following the supplication Allah took a covenant from Abraham and Ishmael to purify His House for those who would make their pilgrimage to it and for those who would worship Him there. Allah accepted the supplication of Prophets Abraham and Ishmael and soon pilgrims from all over Arabia and beyond made their way to Mecca where they learned about Allah and worshipped Him alone and were also instructed how to offer their pilgrimage. Among those who offered their pilgrimage was Ishmael's younger, beloved half-brother, Prophet Isaac. Centuries later their descendants, prophets Solomon, David, John and Jesus made their pilgrimage to the Holy Mosque, Ka'ba, where they too worshiped Allah. It was not always possible for pilgrims to offer their pilgrimage during its special season. Those unable to offer what is known as the "Greater Pilgrimage" would come when they could during other times of the year and offer a lesser pilgrimage. And so it was that Mecca became the center of worship in Arabia, and a hub of activity on account of both its pilgrims and caravaners.

CHAPTER 2 THE NEW GOVERNORS OF MECCA

REVERSION TO IDOLATRY

Prophet's Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac had passed away, and as the centuries passed, the worship of Allah, the Creator, became corrupted. However, the pilgrimage to Ka'ba continued with great treasures being brought by pilgrims that were then stored in the Ka'ba. Prophet Ishmael's descendants and the tribe of Jurhumites had increased greatly in number to the extent that many decided to leave Mecca and settle elsewhere. However, before leaving it had become their practice to gather stones from around the Ka'ba to take with them, then, upon reaching their new settlement position the stones and perform the pilgrimage rites around them. With the new settlements there also came new neighbors, and with their new neighbors came their reversion to idolatry. Their new pagan neighbors influenced them to the extent that soon idols were added to the stones; and as time progressed these idols were brought to Mecca, placed around Ka'ba and worshipped with the idolaters claim that their idols had

powers to intercede between Allah and mankind. To them Allah had become remote and many ceased to believe in the Everlasting Life.

THE GOVERNORS OF MECCA

After the death of Prophet Ishmael, his eldest son, Nabit, became the custodian of Ka'ba, and after his death the custodianship had been entrusted to his maternal grand-father, Madad, and so it was in this way that the custodianship passed from the direct descendants of Ishmael to the tribe of Jurhum. The Jurhumites governed Mecca for many, many years but throughout this period terrible wars ignited and finally they were driven out of the city.

THE BURYING OF ZAMZAM

Before the Jurhumites left Mecca, they buried the well of Zamzam and hid many of the treasures stored in the Ka'ba inside the well. The new governors of Mecca were distant descendants of Prophet Ishmael from the tribe of Khuza'ah in Yemen. However, they failed to find the blessed well that had been given to Lady Hagar and Prophet Ishmael; although its miraculous story was still told and continued to be handed down from one generation to the next.

THE KHUZA'AH, NEW GOVERNORS OF MECCA

The coming of the new governors did not mean that the idols were to be barred from Ka'ba, on the contrary, some of the Khuza'ah inclined to idolatry. Once, when one of their chieftains was returning from an expedition that had taken him through the region we know to day as Syria, he came across the idol worshipping Moabites. Their idols made a great impression upon him so he asked if he might have an idol named Hubal to take back with him to Mecca. The Moabites agreed and upon his return he placed it inside the Ka'ba itself and for many centuries after, up until the opening of Mecca, Hubal became the chief idol of Mecca.

THE RELIGIONS OF ARABIA

Idolatry was commonplace in Arabia, as it was now claimed that Allah had become too remote for them to worship alone and only fragments of the teachings of Prophets Abraham and Ishmael remained. Pagan temples had been erected in many locations and distant second to Ka'ba, the most visited temples were those in the Hijaz dedicated to the idols of Al Lat, Al Uzza, and Manat whom their worshipers claimed were the trinity, daughters of Allah, capable of interceding on their behalf with Him! To the people of Yathrib, the most prestigious temple of Manat was in Kdayd by the Red Sea. As for the Koraysh of Mecca, their second choice was the main temple of Al Uzza, a short journey south of Mecca in the valley called the "Tree" (Nakhlah). It was in the fertile land of Ta'if, that lay some distance outside Mecca, that the Thakif, a branch of the tribe of Hawazin, who were descended from Prophet Ishmael,

erected a highly revered temple dedicated to Al Lat. The Thakif took great pride in their temple and adorned it with riches, but despite its lavish adornments, and pleasant location they knew it could never reach the rank of Ka'ba. The importance of Ka'ba was acknowledged throughout Arabia and it was to the Ka'ba, and not to the other temples, that pilgrims flocked in great numbers each year. In Arabia there were also minority groups of Jews, Nazarenes and Christians, some of whom were knowledgeable of their scriptures and believed in the Oneness of the Creator. Their ancestors had chosen to settle in that barren region on account of a prophecy described in their ancient Holy Books that heralded the arrival of a new prophet to be born there. Each family hoped that the prophet would arise from their own family or tribe.

THE TRIBE OF KORAYSH

Among the descendants of Prophet Ishmael arose a powerful, yet chivalrous, honorable and noble tribe, the tribe of Koraysh. It’s hospitality and generosity, especially to pilgrims, was well recognized and it was from this honored lineage that Prophet Muhammad (sa) was destined to be born. Approximately four hundred years after Prophet Jesus ascent, a man from this tribe called Ksay, married Hubba, the daughter of Hulayl, chief of the Khuza'ah. Ksay was a prominent Arab and Hulayl preferred him to his own sons. Hulayl died during a skirmish that was later resolved through arbitration. Each party agreed that Ksay should become the new governor of Mecca and receive the much coveted custodianship of Ka'ba. Ksay accepted the appointment and sent for the rest of his family then settled them near the Ka'ba. Amongst the members of Ksay's family was a brother named Zuhra, an uncle named Taym, a cousin named Makhzum and several other cousins who were not as close to him as other members of his family. They, together with their families became known as the Koraysh of the Valley. Distant members of his family settled themselves outside Mecca in the surrounding hills and became known as the Koraysh of the Outskirts.

THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Ksay governed Mecca with fairness and loved by everyone and was its undisputed, powerful leader. He took the matter of being the custodian of the Sacred House very seriously, and raised the standard of living of those who tended its upkeep by replacing their tents with permanent dwellings. It was during this time that he built a spacious house for himself in which he conducted tribal meetings. The house was also used for other important gatherings such as weddings and as a point of departure for caravans, and so it was that Ksay's house became known as "The House of Assembly".

PROVISION FOR THE PILGRIMS

Pilgrims flocked to Mecca each year to offer their pilgrimage, and among them were many needy pilgrims. As custodian of the Ka'ba it was Ksay's responsibility to ensure that the needs of the pilgrims were met and that they should neither suffer nor thirst. His own wealth was

insufficient to cope with the needs of the ever increasing number of pilgrims so he called for a meeting to raise funds in which he asked the people of Mecca to pledge a modest annual contribution on their flocks. The Meccans were agreeable and by the time the pilgrims arrived for the Greater Pilgrimage there was sufficient food and water to accommodate the pilgrim's needs. Ksay, anxious to do the best he could for the pilgrims also commissioned an additional leather trough of water to those already provided in Mecca at Mina. Mina lies several miles away on the route to Mecca across the arid and dusty desert, so the trough provided much welcomed relief not only for the pilgrims but for travelers. The income raised through the pledge was more than enough to meet the pilgrim's needs and so it was through this excess that the first covering was made for the Ka'ba from cloth woven in Yemen.

A MATTER OF SUCCESSION

Abdu Manaf was one of Ksay's four sons, and had shown great signs of leadership beyond those of his brothers, who were themselves very capable. However, when the matter of succession arose Ksay's eldest son, Abd Ad-Dharr was Ksay's choice. Just before Ksay died he called for Abd Ad-Dharr and gave him the House of Assembly. He told him that he was going to equalize the matter of rank by decreeing, amongst other matters, that none should be allowed to enter Ka'ba unless he, Abd Ad-Dharr, opened it for them; that no pilgrim be allowed to draw water in Mecca unless he permitted them to do so and that pilgrims were to eat unless he provided for them.

OBEDIENCE OF ADU MANAF

When death came to Ksay, his son Abdu Manaf, complied with his father's wishes and accepted his brother as the new governor and matters ran smoothly.

DISCORD AMONG THE FAMILY

It was however, the next generation of Koraysh -- including the descendants of Ksay's brother Zuhra and is Uncle Taym -- that dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the way in which matters were being administered. They felt that Hashim, a son of Abdu Manaf, who had already succeeded in distinguishing himself in many honorable ways, was more capable and should have the rights transferred to him. Soon, there was a division among the Koraysh that left only the Makhzum and some distant relatives as well as Abd Ad-Dharr's near relatives in support of Abd Ad-Dharr.

THE ALLIANCE OF THE PERFUMED ONES

Hashim and his supporters met together in the precincts of Ka'ba where the daughters of Abdu Manaf prepared a bowl of expensive perfume and placed it before Ka'ba. Each of Hashim's supporters dipped their hands into the bowl and as they did took a solemn oath

never to abandon one another. To seal their solemn pact, each supporter rubbed his perfumed hands over the stones of Ka'ba and from that time onward they were referred to as the "Perfumed Ones".

THE ALLIANCE OF THE CONFEDERATES

Those who supported Abd Ad-Dharr likewise swore an oath of allegiance, and became known as the "Confederates".

THE SANCTITY OF KA'BA AND ITS PRECINCTS

Soon there was an ice-cold atmosphere between the two parties. Matters deteriorated to the extent that the two factions reached the brink of fighting to the death to resolve the matter. However, Ka'ba and its surrounding area -- the perimeters of which extend for several miles -- had always been held sacred and fighting within this area had been strictly forbidden since the time of Prophets Abraham and Ishmael. However, before things reached the point of no return a compromise was proposed which proved acceptable to both parties. The compromise was that Abd Ad-Dharr should retain the keys to Ka'ba together with its rights and also keep his home -- the House of Assembly. On the other hand, Hashim should from now onward receive the right to collect the pledged contributions for welfare of the pilgrims.

CHAPTER 3 HASHIM

HASHIM AND THE PILGRIMS

Before the pilgrimage each year, Hashim would invite the leaders of the tribes to attend a meeting in the House of Assembly to discuss the preparations for the pilgrimage. He would remind them that they had been blessed by being the neighbors of the House of Allah, and that the pilgrims were visitors to His House. He told them that because the pilgrims were the guests of Allah they had more rights upon their generosity than ordinary guests and after having drawn their attention to this right he would ask them to give their pledged contribution. Like his grandfather, he told them that if his own wealth had been sufficient, he would have accommodated the expense himself and not asked them for their contribution to the fund. All complied with Hashim's request and the contribution pledge was collected.

HASHIM ESTABLISHES CARAVAN ROUTES

The life of a caravaner was perilous, but for many it brought prosperity. A caravaner could expect to face many hazards other than the extreme heat of the desert followed by the intense cold of the night during certain times of the year. But, perhaps the greatest hazard of all was the fear of being attacked by marauding tribes. All too often caravans were attacked resulting in the loss of both life and merchandise. Hashim knew well the burden of the

caravaner so he decided to visit with the tribal chieftains along the trade routes traveled by the Koraysh and use his powers of friendly persuasion and fairness to secure a safe passage. One by one the tribes agreed and soon the trade routes became less hazardous. Hashim's sense of fairness and compassion toward his fellow beings was demonstrated yet again during a year in which there was extreme drought followed by famine. Upon hearing of a neighboring tribe's suffering he arranged for a supply of food and water to be distributed among the stricken tribe. This upright act, and others like it, led to the strengthening of bonds between the Koraysh and other tribes. Hashim's just character and ability to organize were known not only by his fellow Arabs but to the great powers of the day, namely the Emperor of Rome and the King of Abyssinia, ruler of Yemen. It was through their admiration of Hashim that he succeeded to negotiate peaceful, lasting treaties, which in turn exempted the Koraysh from the payment of previously enforced trading taxes. Hashim's popularity was such that whenever Koraysh traders reach Angoria -- now Ankara, the Emperor himself would go out to welcome them and show great hospitality and inquire about Hashim. The two great trade routes were now secure, so during the winter when the heat of the desert had died down, caravans would set off on their journey to Yemen, then as summer advanced caravans would set off in the opposite direction on their long trail to the north-west reaching as far away as Palestine or Syria which was at that time part of the Roman Empire.

HASHIM MEETS SALMA, DAUGHTER OF AMR

On the route northwards caravans would make their way to a desert oasis called Yathrib -- now called Medina -- to trade and replenish supplies before setting off again on their long trip. The inhabitants of Yathrib were both Arab and Jew. At first, the Arabs were known as the children of Kaylah but as time passed they had divided into two tribes, the tribes of Aws and the tribe of Khazraj, both of whom were the sons of Kaylah. In those days its was common for a man to have many wives, some as many as forty. Hashim was already married when he met, in Yathrib, a noble, influential lady named Salma, the daughter of Amr from the tribe of Najjar, a branch of Khazraj. Hashim proposed to her and she accepted on condition that she remained in control of her own affairs and that when she gave birth to a son, the boy would remain with her in Yathrib until he reached the age of puberty. Hashim accepted her conditions and the two were married. It was a happy, successful arrangement and Hashim made frequent trips to Yathrib to stay with Salma. On several occasions Hashim continued on from Yathrib to Syria, however, on one such journey he was taken ill in the city of Gaza, Palestine. His illness proved to be serious and he did not recover. Salma was pregnant and later gave birth to a son whom she named Shayba. As Shayba grew up he loved to listen to the heart warming stories about his generous father, and it was through the example of his father’s noble sense of fairness and peaceful character that Shayba modeled his own life.

THE BROTHERS OF HASHIM

Hashim had two blood brothers named Abdu Shams and Muttalib, and a half-brother named

Nawfal. Both Abdu Shams and Nawfal were traders, Abdu Shams' trade route lay between Mecca, Yemen and Syria, whereas, Nawfal's trade route, for the most part, took him to distant Iraq. On account of their commerce, the brothers were away from Mecca for long periods of time resulting in Muttalib, their younger brother, assuming the responsibility of the rights to collect the pilgrimage contribution pledge.

MUTTALIB'S SUCCESSOR

As time passed, Muttalib pondered over who should be his successor. His deceased elder brother Hashim had married four wives and from them he had three sons. Shayba, the son of Salma, although younger than his half-brothers, displayed signs of leadership at an early age. Traders passing through Yathrib would relate reports about him to Muttalib, and the more he heard about his nephew the more impressed he became as his character appeared to be developing to be much like that of his father. Wishing to know more about Shayba he decided to go to Yathrib to see for himself and visit with his extended family. Muttalib was not disappointed, the reports he received were correct, so he asked his mother to entrust Shayba to his guardianship. At first Salma was reluctant to let her son go with him, and Shayba, out of love and respect for his mother, refused to leave without her consent. Muttalib explained to Salma that Mecca had more to offer her son than Yathrib. He reminded her of the nobility of the Koraysh tribe and that it was they who had been entrusted with the prestigious custodianship of the House of Allah. He told her that he was of the opinion that her son stood an excellent chance of receiving the office his father had once held and thereby become one of the chieftains of the Koraysh tribe. Muttalib stressed the point however, that in order for her son to be considered as a candidate for such honors it was imperative for the people of Mecca to know him in person, otherwise he would simply be overlooked. Salma, was convinced by Muttalib's reasoning and knew the proposal was in her son's best interest, so she agreed to let his uncle take him to Mecca. She consoled herself with the knowledge that she could visit him fairly regularly as the journey to Mecca was relatively short, taking ten to eleven days of travel.

THE ARRIVAL OF SHAYBA IN MECCA

Muttalib, with Shayba riding behind him on the camel set out for Mecca. As they entered the City, the people saw Muttalib and thought the youth riding behind him was his new servant and commented: "Look, the servant of Muttalib -- Abd Al Muttalib!" Muttalib was amused and replied, "Be off with you, he is the son of my brother Hashim!" The mistake was a source of amusement and news of his arrival spread throughout Mecca, but the name stuck, so Shayba became affectionately known as Abd al Muttalib.

NAWFAL DISPUTES SHAYBAH'S INHERITANCE

It wasn't long after Shayba's arrival when Nawfal disputed the young man's right over his

father's estate. Muttalib stood by his nephew, and pressure was also brought to bear from Yathrib and Shayba, now known as Abd Al Muttalib, received his rights.

THE DEATH OF MUTTALIB

As time passed, Abd Al Muttalib's character continued to grew in both integrity and honor; the people of Mecca loved him and without doubt he lived up to and surpassed the expectations of his uncle. From an early age he had displayed strong capabilities of just leadership. His uncle had taught him the importance of administering the rights of the pilgrims and he diligently assisted his uncle in its preparation. Several years after is arrival in Mecca, Abd Al Muttalib's uncle passed away. No one in Mecca disputed his nephew's qualifications to succeed him. In fact many Meccans were of the opinion that Abd Al Muttalib surpassed both his father and uncle in fulfilling the duties of Custodian of the House of Allah with all its weighty responsibilities.

CHAPTER 4 ABD AL MUTALIB

THE VISION OF ABD AL MUTTALIB

Abd Al Muttalib was not an idolater, he directed his prayer to Allah alone and loved to be near the Ka'ba. It was because of this love that he would often have his mattress spread out in a place known as 'Hijr Ishmael' -- which is the place where Prophet Ishmael and his mother Lady Hagar lie buried and also where Prophet Ishmael used to pen his sheep --- and sleep there. It was on one such night that he had a vision in which it was said to him, "Dig the sweet one." He asked, "What is the sweet one?" but there was no reply. The next morning he awoke with an overwhelming feeling of happiness and peace, the like of which he had never experience before, so he decided to spend the following night near Hijr Ishmael. That night he had another vision in which the voice told him, "Dig for mercy". He asked the meaning of it but again there was no answer. When he returned to sleep there on the third night the vision came yet again but this time he was told, "Dig for the treasure." When Abd Al Muttalib asked what was meant by the treasure, the vision vanished as before. The vision came again on the fourth night, however this time the voice was more specific and told him to dig for Zamzam. Abd Al Muttalib asked about Zamzam, but unlike the previous occasions the voice answered saying, "Dig for it, you will have no regrets, it is your inheritance from your greatest ancestor. It will neither dry up, nor fail to suffice the pilgrims." The voice told Abd Al Muttalib that Zamzam lay buried under a place in which there was blood, dung and an ants' nest, and that amongst it all he would see a crow pecking. Before the vision departed, the voice told him to supplicate to Allah for the continuous flow of pure water that would suffice all pilgrims.

THE REALIZATION OF ABD AL MUTTALIB'S VISIONS

At dawn, Abd al Muttalib arose and as in the tradition passed down from one generation to the

next from the time of Prophet's Abraham and Ishmael, he circumambulated Ka'ba seven times and reverently kissed the Black Stone. Having completed his rites, he made his way to the door of Ka'ba, took hold the metal ring that hung from its lock and started to supplicate in the manner in which the voice had instructed. As he supplicated a large black crow flew down behind him and not long after another crow joined it. After Abd Al Muttalib had finished his supplication he turned and observed the birds strutting toward two rocks that had been taken as idols, approximately a hundred yards away. The two idols had been named Isaf and Nailah and were among the lesser idols of Mecca. Legend had it that the idols had been early Jurhumites that had been turned into stone because of their profanity. It was between these two idols that the idolaters would slaughter their animals and consequently it was common to find both blood and dung upon the ground. As Abd Al Muttalib approached he noticed an ants nest and knew that this must be the place referred to by the voice in the vision. Wasting no time at all, he returned to his home to get a spade. His son Harith was there so he told him to go and fetch another spade and to come with him to the Ka'ba.

THE DISCOVERY OF ZAMZAM

The sun had risen as they set to work digging between the two idols. As the people started to rise and go about their daily chores and business they noticed Abd Al Muttalib and Harith digging away in the sacred area between their idols and not long after a crowd started to gather to see what they were doing. As much as the Meccans respected Abd Al Muttalib they felt he was going too far and told him he must stop desecrating the ground with his digging. Abd Al Muttalib refused and told his son to stand on guard to prevent anyone interfering with his digging. The digging progressed without any incident and the people began to tire of standing around and had started to disperse when to Abd Al Muttalib's great joy he struck the stone cover of the well of Zamzam. Immediately he thanked Allah, and the excited crowd regrouped around him. News of his find spread quickly throughout Mecca and it wasn't long until a very large, joyous crowd had gathered to celebrate this great discovery.

THE TREASURE OF ZAMZAM

Abd Al Muttalib and his son removed the large stone cover from the forsaken well of Zamzam and as they did to the amazement of everyone, their eyes fell upon the treasure that had been taken from Ka'ba many centuries before when the Jurhumites had been driven from Mecca. There was great excitement and everyone laid claim to a share of the treasure. In those days it was the practice of Meccans to use divining arrows and cast lots to settle major issues with the ceremony taking place within the confines of Ka'ba before their chief idol Hubal. There were three stakes; one that the treasure should be returned to Ka'ba, another that it should be retained by Abd Al Muttalib, and the other that the treasure be divided between the tribes. When the time came for the settlement everyone gathered anxiously by the Ka'ba and the diviner cast the arrows. As the arrows fell they fell in favor of some of the treasure being restored to the Ka'ba, and the remainder being retained by Abd Al Muttalib, none fell in favor of the Koraysh. After the division had been settled it was also decided that the tribe of Hashim

should take charge of the Well of Zamzam as it was their responsibility to provide water for the pilgrims.

CHAPTER 5 THE VOW

ABD AL MUTTALIB TAKES A VOW

To many it would have appeared that Abd Al Muttalib had everything he could desire. He was the Custodian of Ka'ba, handsome, wealthy, generous, and of noble character that had won him the respect of the people of Mecca. However, he only had one son, Harith, whereas his cousins Umayyah, chief of the tribe of Abdu Shams and Mughirah, chief of the tribe of Makhzum had many. The fact that he had just one son hadn't concerned him greatly until he met with resistance from his fellow Meccans during the excavation of Zamzam. At that time he felt weaker than at any other and wished he had more sons to support him. He felt humble to be chosen as the one to be honored to restore the well and was grateful to Allah for His blessings to him, but his heart prompted him to supplicate to Him for ten sons. As he supplicated in earnest, he promised Allah that if He would favor him with ten sons that reached the age of manhood, he would sacrifice one of them in the Ka'ba. Allah heard his supplication and as the years passed he had, to his great pleasure, nine more sons. He never forgot the promise he made to Allah and as his sons reached manhood the matter pressed hard upon his mind, especially as the youngest of his sons, Abdullah, had now reached maturity. Abdullah had grown into a handsome, fine, upstanding young man like his father and although Abd Al Muttalib loved his other sons, Abdullah had become his favorite. Abd Al Muttalib knew that the time had come to fulfill his vow. He was a man of his word and had no intention of turning away from his oath. Until this time, Abd Al Muttalib had kept the matter between Allah and himself secret, no one in his family knew of the oath he had taken many years before.

THE SACRIFICE

Abd Al Muttalib had raised his sons to be true men, and all were obedient to him. One day he called his ten sons together and told them of the oath he had taken. They all accepted, their father's vow was their vow, and bravely they asked him how the matter would be decided. He told them that the matter would be determined by arrow divining and that they must each take an arrow and make their mark on it. After their marks had been made, Abd Al Muttalib sent a message to the arrow-diviner of the Koraysh tribe to meet him in the Ka'ba. Then he took his ten sons into the Sanctuary and led them inside the Ka'ba, then, when the arrow-diviner arrived he told him of his oath. Each son presented his arrow and Abd Al Muttalib stood ready with his knife drawn. The arrows were cast, and the lot fell against Abdullah. Without hesitation, Abd Al Muttalib took his son's hand and led him to the door intending to make straight for the place of sacrifice.

ABDULLAH'S REMALE RELATIVES

Abd Al Muttalib had not considered the fact that he might have to deal with his wives as he did not know they had learned of his intention. Fatima, the mother of Zubair, Abu Talib and Abdullah who were all candidates for the sacrifice, was, on her mother's side, descended from Abd, one of the sons of Ksay and belonged to the very influential tribe of Makhzum. When Fatima learned of the vow, she immediately rallied her co-wives, who were from less influential tribes, and together with her own powerful tribe they now marched in force to the Ka'ba to prevent the sacrifice. As Abd Al Muttalib opened the door of Ka'ba his eyes fell upon the large crowd assembled in the courtyard. Everyone noticed that the expression on Abd Al Muttalib and Abdullah's faces had changed. Fatima and her kinsmen were quick to realize that it was Abdullah who had been chosen as the sacrifice. Just then, someone in the crowd called out, "For whom is the knife!" and others took up the cry although it was evident for whom the knife was intended. Abd Al Muttalib tried to tell them of his vow, but was interrupted by Mughirah, the chief of Makhzum who told him that they would not permit him to make the sacrifice. He told him that they were prepared to offer a sacrifice in his stead, even to the extent of ransoming Abdullah with all the property of the sons of Makhzum. They were adamant, and prepared to take whatever steps were necessary in order to spare the life of Abdullah. By this time Abdullah's brothers had come out of Ka'ba. Until then none had spoken, but now they too turned to their father imploring him to spare the life of their brother and to offer some other kind of sacrifice instead. There was no one present who did not urge him not to do so. Being an upright man, Abd Al Muttalib did not want to break the vow he had taken, but the pressure upon him was great. Reluctantly he agreed to consult with a wise, Jewess who lived in Yathrib and was familiar with matters such as this and could tell him whether a substitution was in fact permissible in this case, and if it was, what form of ransom would be required.

THE WISE WOMAN OF YATHRIB

Abd Al Muttalib set off with Abdullah and several of his brothers for Yathrib -- Abd Al Muttalib's birth-place. When they reached Yathrib they inquired the whereabouts of the wise lady and were told she no longer lived there but in Khyber that was approximately ninety miles north of Yathrib. So they continued their journey through the hot desert until the reached Khyber were they found the wise woman. Abd Al Muttalib told her of the oath he had taken and inquired whether it was possible to offer a ransom instead. She listened intently and told them to return the following day after she had time to consider the matter and that she would give them an answer. Abd Al Muttalib prayed fervently to Allah and the next morning he and his sons returned for the verdict. The wise woman greeted them and asked what was the usual compensation offered amongst their tribe, so they told her that it was common place to offer ten camels. Upon hearing this she told them to return home and as soon as they arrived to put Abdullah and ten camels side by side and cast lots between them. She told them that in the event the arrow should fall against Abdullah they were to increase the number of camels by ten, and cast lots yet again until Allah accepted them by the arrow falling against the

camels. She also told them that once the number of camels had been determined all were to be sacrificed immediately in order that Abdullah might live.

THE SACRIFICE OF 100 CAMELS

After having thanked the wise woman, Abd Al Muttalib and his sons set out for home straight away and upon reaching Mecca Abdullah and ten camels were taken into the courtyard of Ka'ba. Abd Al Muttalib went inside the Ka'ba and supplicated to Allah asking Him to accept what they were about to do. Upon the conclusion of his supplication he came out of the Ka'ba and the lots began to be cast. The first arrow fell against Abdullah, so ten more camels were added. The lot was cast again, but once more the arrow fell against Abdullah, and ten more camels were added and so it continued. It was only when the number of camels reached one hundred that the arrow finally fell against the camels.

THE RANSOM IS ACCEPTED

Everyone was overjoyed including Abd Al Muttalib, however, he wanted to make quite sure that this was, without a shadow of a doubt the ransom required by Allah to decide the issue, so he insisted that the lots be cast twice more. Anxiously, everyone looked on as the lots were cast, but to everyone's relief on each occasion, the arrow fell against the camels. There was no doubt left in Abd Al Muttalib's mind that Allah had accepted his expiation, and the camels were sacrificed immediately and the abundant supply of meat was amply distributed amongst the poor, needy and the orphans. There was so much meat left over that every sector of the community ate from it and joined in the great celebration.

CHAPTER 6 THE MARRIAGE OF ABDULLAH TO AMINA

There was great happiness amongst Abd al Muttalib's family, not to mention his tribe, and the day-to-day life resumed once more. Shortly after this significant event, Abd al Muttalib started to make plans for Abdullah's future. Abdullah was now eighteen years of age and his father thought it was time for him to marry, so he started to search for a suitable match. After much consideration he came to the conclusion that Amina, the orphaned daughter of Wahb, would be the most compatible bride for his son. Amina was of noble birth, her father, Wahb had been the chief of the Zuhra -- a branch of the Koraysh -- but upon his death, her paternal uncle, Wuhayb had become its new chieftain and taken care of her. His own daughter, Halah, was of similar age and so the two girls had grown up together like sisters. Among Amina's many qualities she was known for her honorable, endearing character and to compliment these characteristics she was very intelligent. Years later, Prophet Muhammad, (sa) confirmed her status when he told his companions, "I have been chosen from the most choice." During Abd Al Muttalib's search for a suitable bride for his beloved son, it came to his notice that Wuhayb's daughter, Halah, was also of marriageable age, so he asked his permission to marry her himself. A proposal such as this was indeed a great honor and through these kind of

arrangements essential inter-tribal ties were often strengthened. Upon his return, Abd Al Muttalib told Abdullah that he had found the perfect match for him. Abdullah was overjoyed when he heard all the wonderful things his father had to say about Amina and so preparations for a double wedding were made. As soon as the wedding preparations had been finalized, the bridal party set out for the house of Wahb. On the way to the celebration, people came out of their houses to greet the procession and wish them well. Abdullah had always been handsome, but that day he looked more handsome than ever. As the party passed the homes of the Bani Asad, Abdullah's cousin, Kutaylah, sister of Warakah, called to him and with the permission of his father he stopped to speak with her. Kutaylah had noticed something very special about Abdullah that day, she had seen a radiant light upon his face, the like of which she had never seen before. On impulse she asked Abdullah to marry her, offering him the same number of camels that been sacrificed in order to save him. Abdullah was astonished by the proposal but decline her offer and the bridal procession continued on its way. In those days it was the custom to stay in the house of the bride for several days after the marriage and then take her to her new home shortly afterwards. However, a few days after Abdullah and Amina's marriage, it was necessary for Abdullah to return home. On his way he met Kutaylah who told him that she was no longer interested in him because the radiant light she had seen on his face was no longer there. Amina conceived on the first night of their marriage and the young couple were very happy together. Everything his father had told him proved to be true, and Abdullah was as delighted with Amina as she was with him. Two months after their marriage Abdullah joined a trading caravan destined for Al Shams. Today, Al Shams is a conglomerate of several countries known to us as Syria, Jordan and Palestine. On the return journey, Abdullah was taken seriously ill in Yathrib. Abdullah had many relatives in Yathrib and so the caravan left him in their care and continued on to Mecca without him.

THE DEATH OF ABDULLAH

A messenger bearing news of Abdullah's illness was sent on in advance of the caravan and as soon as Abd Al Muttalib heard the disturbing news he sent his eldest son, Harith, to Yathrib to bring Abdullah home. Harith was not destined to see his brother again as Abdullah died before he reached Yathrib and so he was buried near his cousins, the children of Adiyy, the son of Najjar in Yathrib. Harith returned to Mecca and conveyed the saddening news to his father and Amina whereupon great sorrow fell upon the entire family.

LADY AMINA'S PREGNANCY

Allah, the Most High, made Lady Amina's pregnancy easy for her, in fact she commented that she didn't feel any different from her usual self. However, as her pregnancy progressed Lady Amina became aware of a light shinning from within her. One night in particular, the light was so spiritually, intensely bright that she had the ability to see the castles and turrets of far away Basra in Al Shams. During her pregnancy Lady Amina had many visions concerning her unborn baby. On one such occasion she heard a voice telling her, "You are carrying in your womb the master of this nation. When he is born say, 'I place him under the protection of the One from

the evil of every envier; call him Muhammad.'"

CHAPTER 7 THE MEMORABLE YEAR OF THE ELEPHANT

Fifty days before Muhammad was born, an event occurred which every person in Mecca would remember for the rest of their life. It was an attempt by Abraha, the governor of Yemen, to destroy the Sacred Ka'ba with an elephant's might. Before that time the Arabs paid little attention to the passage of years, although each month was recognized by the new moon. From that year onwards the Arabs would refer to events as being either before the year of the elephant or after it. At that time, Yemen was under the rule of Abyssinia. The King of Abyssinia, called the Negus, had appointed a governor named Abraha to govern Yemen in his absence. The Negus was a Nazarene who followed the true teachings of Prophet Jesus and not the trinitarian teachings of Paul, and Abraha, anxious to promote himself still further in the eyes of his king, decided he would build a magnificent church with the intent of luring pilgrims from Ka'ba to it. The church was built in Sanna with marble pillaged from the ruined palaces of Sheba, whilst its interior was embellished with gold and silver, and its pulpit carved from ivory and ebony. Upon completion, Abraha sent word to the Negus that he had built a magnificent church in his honor and mentioned his underlying intention. Abraha bragged so much of his intention to lure pilgrims away from the Ka'ba that word spread like the fury of a violent sandstorm throughout Arabia. As could be expected the Arabs were enraged by the whole affair to the extent that a man from the tribe of Kinanah, a branch of the Koraysh, was so incensed by the audacity of Abraha that he set out for Sanna determined to defile the church. When he reached Sanna night had fallen so he crept unseen into the church and defiled it with trash and filth. Having accomplished his mission he left undetected. When news of the defilement reached Abraha his anger was so great that he swore to take revenge and to lead an army to would destroy Ka'ba once and for all. Immediately, orders were issued to his army and they prepared themselves for the long march across the hot and sandy desert to Mecca. He also gave orders that an elephant should lead them as a sign of his might. As soon as the preparations were complete Abraha gave the order to march with the canopied elephant leading the way. Not far out of Sanna the army encountered resistance from a small band of Arabs, but they were greatly out numbered and fled. Their leader, Nufayl, from the tribe of Khathan, was captured and in fear for his life offered to guide Abraha and his soldiers on to Ka'ba. The news of Abraha's march to destroy Ka'ba reached Ta'if ahead of their arrival, so a delegation from the Thakif, fearing Abraha might mistake their temple of Al Lat for Ka'ba, rode out to meet him and offered to be Nufayl's co-guides, and Abraha accepted. At a place called Mughammis, a few miles outside Mecca, Abraha decided to strike camp and it was there that Nufayl died and was buried. Meanwhile, Abraha sent his spies on in advance to the outskirts of Mecca. On their way they came across a herd of camels belonging to Abd Al Muttalib together with some other animals so they seized them together with anything else they could lay their hands on and sent their plunder back to Abraha. In the meantime, Abd Al Muttalib, together with other Korayshi chieftains and chiefs from neighboring tribes met together to discuss how they might best defend their beloved Ka'ba. After much deliberation all concluded that

Abraha's army was so great in number that they did not stand a chance against him, so Abd Al Muttalib decided it was best for the people of Mecca to seek refuge on the slopes of Mount Thabir saying, "O people of Koraysh, you will be protected," and assured them that Ka'ba would be unharmed saying, "Abraha and his army will not reach the Holy Ka'ba because it has a Protecting Lord." As the people of Mecca made their way to the mountain, Abd Al Muttalib supplicated saying, "O Allah, it is customary for one to protect his possessions, so please, protect Yours." Soon after, Abraha sent his envoy into Mecca inviting their leader to visit him in his camp and so Abd Al Muttalib, together with one of his sons accompanied Abraha's envoy back to the camp. As Abd Al Muttalib approached, Abraha was greatly impressed by his noble composure and rose to greet him. Abraha then told Abd Al Muttalib of his intent to destroy the Ka'ba and asked him if there was any favor he might grant him. Abraha was extremely surprised by Abd Al Muttalib's reply, he expected him to plead with him to spare Ka'ba but instead Abd Al Muttalib asked for the return of his herd of camels. Abraha scoffed at his request but the wise, trusting, Abd Al Muttalib replied, "I am the lord of my herd of camels, so I must protect them. The Lord of Ka'ba will protect His House." After this totally unexpected reply, Abd Al Muttalib and his son returned to Mecca. Soon after this Abraha gave the order to advance on Ka'ba and the soldiers took their marching positions behind the elephant. Now that all was ready the elephant was given the command to rise and march, but it refused and sat still. Its handlers tried to tempt it, but when that failed they beat it, driving iron hooks deep into its flesh, but still the elephant refused to march on Ka'ba. Then, one of its handlers had an idea to trick the poor elephant by turning it around to face the direction of Yemen, then, as soon as it started to walk to turn it around to march on Ka'ba. His deception worked for a while. They succeeded to get the elephant to stand, and even take a few steps in the direction of Yemen, but when he tried to turn it around to march on Ka'ba, the elephant, with all its might, sat down and despite the renewed extreme cruelty it endured the elephant still refused to march on Ka'ba. Suddenly, the sky became blackened with flocks of birds named "Ababil". Each bird carried three stones, one in each claw and another in its beak. When the birds reached Abraha's army they pelted the soldiers with them. As soon as a soldier was struck by a stone he died -- not one single stone missed its mark. As for Abraha, he did not die instantly, the stones that hit him brought about a painfully slow death that caused his bones to crumble thereby bringing about the agonizing collapse of his ribs. These miraculous affairs were witnessed by all the citizens present in Mecca that day, and as a result the year became known as the "Year of the Elephant." As for the grave of Nufayl, the guide who had led Abraha to Ka'ba, the Koraysh took stoning it. Unfortunately, there are some misguided people who promote the theory that the stones carried by the birds were not in fact stones but rather microbes or germs. Their knowledge of the Words of Allah is indeed pitiful, because their theory is in direct contradiction to the unchangeable word Allah, Himself, uses in the Koran to describe the event. The word Allah uses is "Hijaratin" which means "stones" -- and the knowledge of Allah is the truth. Allah sent down the following chapter confirming the event:

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful. Have you not seen how Allah dealt with the companions of the Elephant? Did He not cause their schemes to go astray? And He sent

against them flights of birds pelting them with stones of baked clay, so that He made them like straw eaten (by cattle). Chapter 105, The Elephant

CHAPTER 8 THE BIRTH OF THE LAST PROPHET OF ALLAH, THE SEALING OF THE PROPHETHOOD

THE PROPHECY IS FULFILLED

On Monday, 12th of Rabi-al-Awwal -- 570 years after Jesus ascended into heaven to await his return before the end of the world -- Lady Amina gave birth to her blessed son in the house of Abu Talib. Ash-Shaffa, the mother of Abd Al Rahman, attended his birth and as Lady Amina gave birth her blessed baby was delivered prostrating upon his tiny hands and knees, then sneezed and said, "Al Hamdulillah" -- praise be to Allah -- whereupon a voice from the heavens replied, "May Allah have mercy upon you." As Ash-Shaffa looked out into the night sky the horizon became illuminated so that the very distant castles of Greece became clearly visible to her. Incidentally, "Al Hamdulillah" was the same praise Prophet Adam offered as he sneezed upon reaching earth. The beautiful baby was born without a trace of dirt upon him, and a sweet aroma caressed his perfect little body. Lady Amina remembered the instruction she had been given in her vision and supplicated to Allah with it for her little son, then gave him to Ash-Shaffa, the mother of Abd Al Rahman to hold. News that Lady Amina had given birth to a son was sent straight away to Abd Al Muttalib. As soon as he heard the good news he rushed to see his new grandson. When he reached the house his heart was filled with joy and tender loving care. He cradled the sweet baby wrapped in a white cloth in his arms and then took him to the Ka'ba where he offered a prayer of thanksgiving to Allah for the safe delivery of his grandson. Before returning his new grandson to Lady Amina he went home to show him to his own family. Standing at the door waiting for his father's return was his three year old son Abbas. Lovingly, Abd Al Muttalib told his son, "Abbas, this is your brother, give him a kiss," so Abbas, who was in reality his uncle, bent over and kissed his new baby brother. After everyone had admired the baby, Abd Al Muttalib returned to Lady Amina and in accordance with her vision and a vision Abd Al Muttalib had seen, the sweet baby was named Muhammad. When people asked why they had named him Muhammad they replied, "To be praised in the heavens and earth." Before that time the name Muhammad was unknown and no other child had ever been given that special name. Abu Talib's house, the house in which the Holy Prophet (sa) was born exists today and is used to house an Islamic library.

SPECIAL EVENTS DURING THIS BLESSED NIGHT

Ash-Shaffa was not the only person to witness miraculous events of this very special night. As Othman, the son of Abi As's mother gazed up into the night sky she witnessed the stars lower themselves and a light so brilliant appeared at the time of his birth that she could see nothing except light. In the kingdom of Chosroes, fortifications shook and balconies collapsed, whilst the waters of Lake Tiberias ebbed, and the famous flame of Persia, which had not been

extinguished since it was lit a thousand years before, was suddenly quite unexplainably extinguished. In the heavens, meteors were commanded to be on guard so as to prevent the satans from listening to the news the angels bore about the events of this very blessed night.

THE KNOWLEDGEABLE JEW

Amongst the citizens of Mecca were several Jews, one of whom was knowledgeable of the scriptures. He knew from his learning and the signs of the time that the birth of a new prophet was imminent and anxiously awaited his arrival. On the night Prophet Muhammad, (sa) was born, a strange feeling came over him that prompted him to rush to the door of his house and ask some Koraysh tribesmen, who happened to be passing, if they had heard of any births that night. The tribesmen replied that they knew of none, so he asked them to go and find out then bring word to him. He felt sure that this was the night in which the new prophet had been born, and if his feelings were correct he knew he would indeed be able to recognize him by a special, prominent mark on his skin that lay between his shoulders. Sometime later, the tribesmen returned to the expectant Jew and told him that a son had indeed been born to Lady Amina, the widowed wife of Abdullah, son of Abd Al Muttalib. The Jew asked them to take him to see the newly born and his mother, so in haste they made their way to Abu Talib's house. When they arrived, Lady Amina presented her darling son to them and as the cloth that covered him was gently rolled back the Jew saw the unmistakable mark and fainted. When he regained consciousness he announced the prophethood had been taken away from the Children of Israel and said, "O people of Koraysh, by Allah, he will conquer you in a way that the news will traverse both east and west." The mark the Jew referred to was circular and read, "There is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet", and it was from this identifying mark that the sweet aroma of musk exuded.

THE DECISION OF LADY AMINA AND ABD AL MUTTALIB

Abdullah was a young man when he died and therefore had very little to leave his wife and unborn baby. All he was able to leave them was an Abyssinian maid named Barakah, which means blessing, a few camels and some goats. Barakah was also known by the name Umm Ayman. During the first days of our beloved Prophet's life, Barakah helped his mother to take care of him, and Thuwaybah, who attended his birth, became his first wet-nurse. In those days it was the practice of noble and well-to-do families to entrust their newly born infants to the care of good families living far from Mecca where the infant would be less likely to contract the many diseases that all too often accompanied the pilgrims. Among the many advantages of sending a newly born to be raised in the desert was that it was there that Arabic in its purest form was spoken, and the accomplishment of speaking pure Arabic was a most sought after quality. Youngsters also learned the essential art of survival through the mutual love and care for one another that in turn lead to excellent manners and a chivalrous nature. With this in mind Lady Amina and Abd Al Muttalib decided to send Muhammad to be raised in the desert.

HALIMA

Soon after his birth, several Bedouin families made their twice yearly journey to Mecca in search of a child to foster. No fee was requested by the foster parents as one might suppose, rather, the intent was to strengthen ties between noble, well-to-do families and perhaps receive a favor from its parents or relatives. Amongst the prospective foster mothers was a lady called Halima, the daughter of Abdullah Al Sadiyyah from the tribe of Banu Hawazin. Halima's family had always been poor, and that year in particular had been harsh for them on account of the drought that devastated the area. Halima had a young baby of her own, so together with her husband, Abi Kabshah, and baby they traveled in the company of other families from their tribe to Mecca. Halima carried her son as she rode upon their donkey whilst her husband walked by her side and the sheep ran along beside them. When they set out, the sheep's milk had been a constant source of nourishment for them, but the strain of the journey took its toll and its milk dried up. Halima's own milk was insufficient to satisfy her baby, and many a time her baby cried itself to sleep out of hunger. Before reaching Mecca, there was another setback, Halima's donkey started to show signs of lameness, so they proceeded slowly at their own pace whilst the others went on ahead. Because of the delay, Halima and her family were the last of the prospective foster parents to reach Mecca. By the time she arrived each of the other prospective foster mothers had visited the homes of parents wishing to send their newly born to the safety of the desert, and chosen a baby. However, the planning of Allah was that all had declined the offer to take Lady Amina's baby on account of him being an orphan, and so when Halima arrived he was the only one available. As Halima entered Lady Amina's house she found the tiny baby sleeping upon his back wrapped in a white woolen shawl under which a green piece of silk had been placed. Instantaneously, with just one glance, in the same way that the wife of Pharaoh’s heart had been filled with love for the baby Moses, Allah filled Halima’s heart with overflowing love. Halima was overcome by his beauty, and as she bent down to pick him up she smelt the delicate fragrance of musk. Fearing she might disturb him, she placed her had over his chest and as she did he smiled, then opened his eyes and from his eyes beamed a radiant light. Gently, and lovingly she kissed him between his eyes and offered him her right breast and immediately felt a surge of milk, he accepted her breast and suckled away contentedly. After a little while she offered him her left breast but even at this very tender age fairness was inherent in his nature and he declined leaving it for his new suckling brother. Later on that day, Halima returned to her husband and told him that there was no doubt in her mind that she wanted to foster Lady Amina's baby -- it was of no consequence to her that the baby was an orphan, or that future favors may not be possible -- the baby had completely captivated her heart.

THE BONDING

It is through the nourishing milk a foster mother gives to her charge that the baby gains an extended family into which marriage to its siblings is not permitted. And so it was that Halima's foster child would refer to her in later years as his mother, and to her children as his

brothers and sisters. Right from the very beginning, the bonding between Halima and her foster child proved to be a very great blessing for not only her family but the entire tribe. And it was because of this very close relationship that her people were, in the years that followed, protected and led to Paradise.

THE PEACEFUL NIGHT

Whilst Halima was nursing Lady Amina's baby, her husband, Abi Kabshah, went to tend his sheep and was very surprised to find its udder full of milk. When he milked it there was so much milk that there was more than enough to satisfy the entire family, that night they drank their fill and slept peacefully. When they awoke, Abi Kabshah exclaimed, "Halima, by Allah, I see you have chosen a blessed spirit, did you notice how we spent such a blessed night and are enjoying its benefits?"

CHAPTER 9 LIFE IN THE DESERT

The time soon came for the foster parents to set off for their desert home with their charges, so Halima made her farewells to Lady Amina who handed her beloved son up to her as she sat upon her donkey. Halima and her husband were quick to notice the multiple blessings that constantly came their way. Their donkey had always been the slowest ride because it was frail, and more recently showed signs of progressive lameness, but now it out-ran the others whilst the rest of the party looked on in amazement asking Halima if the donkey was the same one she had come with.

THE LAND OF BANI SA’AD

Before they reached the land of Bani Sa’ad, the vegetation had already become scant, but upon reaching it there was no vegetation in sight, the land was barren with signs of drought everywhere. However, Halima's sheep would wander off yet always return full. It was so noticeable that the others in her party told their shepherds to take their sheep and follow Halima's, however, hers always returned full but theirs did not and yielded abundant milk. The blessings never ceased to escape the attention of Halima's family and when they reached home their land became fertile once more an the palm trees bore an abundance of dates.

AL SHAIMA

Halima had an older daughter named Hudhafa, also known as Al Shaima. Al Shaima loved her new brother dearly and never had to wait to be asked to look after him. It was a very happy time for the entire family and Halima's foster child grew rapidly in strength and out grew other children of similar age. Halima's tribe in particular was famous for speaking pure Arabic and many of its tribesmen had become famous on account of their eloquent speech and poetry; it was in such an environment that the young Muhammad learned the art of the precise diction

of pure Arabic, however he did not learn how to read or write.

THE RETURN TO MECCA

Halima never ceased to wonder at the growth and strength of her foster son and thought it was time for him to visit his mother in Mecca so preparations were made for the journey. When they reached Mecca Lady Amina was delighted to see and hold her son once more, but an epidemic had broken out and she feared for his safety so it was agreed that Halima should take him back with her to their desert home.

THE TWO ANGELS

Little Muhammad loved to play with his brothers but also enjoyed sitting alone by himself. Several months had passed since his return from Mecca when one day as his brothers were playing not far away among the sheep and he sat alone, two angels, having taken the appearance of men, dressed in pure white robes came to him with a golden bowl containing snow. Muhammad was neither afraid nor yet concerned when they miraculously opened his chest, felt around his heart, washed it, then sealed his chest and left leaving no trace whatsoever of an incision. His brothers saw the two men, and watched in awe what had happened and as soon as they left ran as fast as their legs could carry them to tell their mother. Halima and her husband rushed to Muhammad and found him standing alone. His face looked somewhat pale and Halima held him gently in her arms and asked what had happened. He told them about the two men and how they had opened his chest and looked for something, but what it was they were looking for he told them he did not know. Halima looked at his chest but there were no signs of an opening whatsoever, nor yet were there any traces of blood. She looked for the two men, but there was no sign of them either. The only difference she could find was that the small mark she had taken to be a birth-mark between his shoulders appeared to be raised a little more than usual. Halima and her husband questioned their sons repeatedly, but none deviated from the account they first related and were convinced that the boys had spoken the truth. Halima and her husband were extremely worried by the incident and feared that bad jinn were trying to harm their beloved foster son. Fearing for his safety, it was decided to return the young Muhammad to Lady Amina, so once again Halima set off with Muhammad to Mecca.

HALIMA'S DECISION

Halima decided not to tell Lady Amina the real reason for his early return but Lady Amina was quick to realize she was concealing something. At last Lady Amina persuaded Halima to tell her the real reason for her son's hasty return. Lady Amina listened intently to the account of the opening of his chest and of Halima's fear that some bad jinn may be trying to harm him. Lady Amina comforted her and told her that no harm would come to him because she had been told that he was destined for an important role. She also told Halima about her blessed

pregnancy and of the light that had shone from her womb. After hearing this Halima's heart was at peace once more and greatly relieved to know her fears for her beloved foster child were unfounded. Lady Amina thanked Halima for the loving care she gave her son and once again Halima and her foster son returned to their home in the desert where he lived with his extended family until he reached five years old at which time he returned to live with his mother in Mecca. The event of his chest opening was described in detail by Prophet Muhammad, (sa) in later years. He told his companions that the men were angels and when they opened his chest they were looking for a speck of black. Upon finding it they removed it and washed his heart in pure snow from the golden bowl then resealed his chest. He also said that each son of Adam, except Mary and her son, is touched by satan at birth.

CHAPTER 10 A NEW LIFE IN MECCA

It wasn't long before the young Muhammad had settled down very happily to his new lifestyle in the City of Mecca and found that he had lots of cousins, an affectionate grandfather named Abd Al Muttalib, as well as many uncles and aunts. Amongst the children Muhammad loved most were Hamza and his young sister Saffiyah, the children of his grandfather, Abd Al Muttalib. Muhammad and Hamza were practically the same age, however, Muhammad was the elder, although technically speaking, Hamza was his uncle and Saffiyah his aunt.

THE JOURNEY TO YATHRIB

One day, Lady Amina learned that a caravan would soon be leaving Mecca and pass through Yathrib (Medina) on its way north. It was a wonderful opportunity for Muhammad, who was now six, to meet the rest of his cousins and relatives that lived there. Barakah, Lady Amina's maid, made the necessary preparations for the eleven day journey and they left with the caravan riding two camels, one ridden by Lady Amina and her son, the other by Barakah. They stayed in Yathrib for a month and the young Muhammad met more of his cousins, the children of Adiyy. He enjoyed being with them and went kite flying and sometimes they would take him to their large well where he learned to swim. It was a happy time but the month soon passed and the caravan destined for Mecca was ready to leave, so they made their farewells and departed.

THE DEATH OF LADY AMINA

As the caravan journeyed to Mecca, Lady Amina was taken seriously ill and never recovered. The angels took away her soul at a village called Al Abwa and it is there that she lies buried. Barakah did her best to comfort the sobbing young Muhammad whose heart became vacant at the loss of his mother and together they made the heartbreaking journey to the house of his grandfather in Mecca. Abd Al Muttalib, deeply saddened by the loss, took his grandson into his own household and a very special love bonded them even more closely together.

THE LOVE OF ABD AL MUTTALIB

For many years Abd Al Muttalib had taken to sleeping near the Ka'ba at Hijr Ishmael, the place where he had been told in a vision to dig for the well of Zamzam many years before Abdullah, Muhammad's father was born. At Hijr Ishmael his couch would be spread out for him and more often than not it was there that one would find him. There was an unwritten rule that no one sat on his couch, not even his young son Hamza, however, such was the love he had for his grandson Muhammad that he alone was welcome to join him there. One day some of Muhammad's uncles found him sitting on the couch and suggested he should not do so. Immediately, his grandfather told them, "Let my son stay, by Allah, he has a great future." The young Muhammad was a constant source of pleasure to his grandfather and both enjoyed the company of each other. Such was his endearing personality that anyone who met him loved Muhammad. It was noticeable that even at such a tender age, Muhammad showed signs of wisdom far beyond his years and when Abd Al Muttalib attended important tribal meetings in the House of Assembly with other elders of the tribe, he would take his grandson with him. Muhammad's opinion was often sought in earnest despite his age, whereupon, Abd Al Muttalib would proudly comment, "There is a great future ahead for my son!" Abd Al Muttalib always referred with pride to his grandson as being his "son".

THE DEATH OF ABD AL MUTTALIB

Abd Al Muttalib was now eighty-two years of age and a few months after his grandson's eighth birthday he was taken ill and passed away. Before Abd Al Muttalib died he entrusted the care of his grandson to his son Abu Talib, the blood brother of Muhammad's father Abdullah, so without hesitation Abu Talib gladly became Muhammad's guardian and took him into his own household. As Abd Al Muttalib's bier was carried to a place known as Al Hujun for burial, many walked in his funeral procession and his young grandson shed many tears as he walked with them to the graveside. It was a time of great sorrow. Like his father before him, Abu Talib became a loving guardian to his nephew and his wife, Fatima, daughter of Asad, Hashim's son, and half brother of Abd Al Muttalib, did all she could to compensate for the mother he had lost. Indeed, such was the degree of her care that in later years after her beloved trust had attained prophethood, he told those around him that rather than let him go hungry, Fatima would have preferred to let her own children go without, but he was never of a greedy nature and would share whatever he was given. Upon the death of Abd Al Muttalib the ascendancy to the house of Hashim had weakened for his family. All but one of the honorable offices he had held for so long now passed to Harb, the son of Umayya. The only position left for his household was that of providing for the pilgrims.

THE GUARDIANSHIP OF ABU TALIB

When Abd Al Muttalib passed away there was very little left for his heirs to inherit and Abu Talib, although his circumstances were restricted, was rich in heritage, honor and nobility. Like

his father, he loved his nephew dearly, there wasn't anything he would not do for him. Many a night the young Muhammad would be found snuggled up to his uncle in bed, sleeping peacefully until the light of the morning. During the day, Muhammad would go with him wherever he might go and when he was old enough Abu Talib taught him the skill of how to masterfully shepherd, with both tenderness and care his sheep, which was a vital source of food and income to his family. It was a position of trust and one will no doubt recall that most prophets, peace be upon him, were shepherds at one time or another during their life.

THE DROUGHT

Drought had stricken Mecca and its neighboring settlements in the valley yet again. It was a hard time for everyone both old and young alike. Abu Talib was highly respected in his tribe and in times of need, such as this, they would often turn to him for help and advice. The situation continued to worsen and so in desperation several of the Koraysh went to Abu Talib to ask him to pray for rain. Muhammad was with him and heard their request so together, with Abu Talib carrying him on his shoulders, they made their way to the Ka'ba to supplicate to Allah. As they entered the precincts of Ka'ba the sky was blue and the heat of the sun beat down just as it had done so for many weeks. Muhammad, with his delicate tiny hand held on tightly to his uncle's fingers and together they supplicated for rain. Within moments, clouds gathered from all directions and rain started to fall -- the drought was over. Like Halima, Abu Talib was quick to recognize the multiple blessings he and others shared on account of his nephew.

CHAPTER 11 THE EARLY YEARS

It was time for the annual trip to Syria. Even though Hashim had secured pacts with tribes along the caravan route many years before, the journey was arduous and not without danger. With this in mind Abu Talib decided to leave his nephew behind thinking it was better for him to remain at home with Fatima and his other children. When the time came for the caravan to depart, Muhammad, who was now twelve years old, rushed up to him and threw his arms around him. Abu Talib never had the heart to refuse his nephew anything at all and so it was agreed that he would join him on the long trip north to Syria.

BUHAIRAH, THE MONK

After many weeks of arduous travel the caravan reached a place called Tayma, a village on the outskirts of Basra. It was there that a monk by the name of Buhairah lived alone in a hermitage that had been inherited by a succession of hermit monks. Over the centuries, important religious documents had been brought to the hermitage and left by his predecessors so Buhairah had made it his life's work to study them well and had become very knowledgeable. In the documents were prophecies that told of another prophet to come after Jesus, peace be upon him. The prophecies described in detail the time in which he would be

born, his appearance, character and background and it was Buhairah's dearest wish to be blessed to live long enough to see him. One day as Buhairah was meditating outside his hermitage he noticed a caravan in the distance making its way towards the city. It was a common sight to see caravans making their way there, but as he gazed towards it he noticed there was something very different about this one. In the blue sky was a lone white cloud that floated just above the caravaners heads, when the caravan changed direction the cloud would follow. He watched the caravan more intently and when it started to descend the neighboring hills he witnessed the palm tress bow their branches as the caravan passed by. He noticed something else even more strange, when the caravan came to rest under the trees the cloud disappeared and the palm branches bowed down still further to provide a dense and cooling shade. Just before the caravan reached the market place it halted again under the shade of the trees and Muhammad, being the youngest, was asked to tend to the camels whilst the others went to the marketplace. Buhairah made haste to greet the caravaners and invited them to eat with him; caravans had stopped there many times before, but Buhairah had never invited them nor yet any other caravaners to join him. As they sat down to eat Buhairah looked at each one in turn, then asked if there was anyone missing from the party. They informed him that there was another, a boy, whom they had asked to tend the camels. Buhairah insisted that the boy should join them, and the caravaners felt embarrassed at their unintentional forgetfulness and so Muhammad was invited to join them. When he arrived, Buhairah observed his appearance and manners closely. After a while he questioned him and then asked him to swear by the idols of Mecca -- which was common practice amongst the Arabs. Muhammad refused saying, "There is nothing more hateful to me than to do that." The answers Muhammad gave Buhairah convinced him ninety-nine percent that the young boy, in whose company he was, was none other than the one prophesied in the scriptures to become the last Prophet of Allah. However, one thing bothered him, Abu Talib had referred to Muhammad as being his son, and the scriptures stated quite clearly that the last prophet would be an orphan, so he inquired about Muhammad's parents and was told that indeed Muhammad was an orphan, and that Abu Talib was not his real father, rather, he was his paternal uncle. Now, Buhairah knew for certain that his dearest wish had been fulfilled and that he had been blessed to live long enough to meet the boy destined to be the last Prophet of Allah. He was overcome with joy but at the same time a great sense of fear struck deep within his heart. He told Abu Talib that he must take great care of Muhammad and advised him not to continue onto Basra as he feared the descendants of the Jews that had migrated to Arabia many years before to await the arrival of the last prophet would also notice his signs and try to harm him as he was not of their race. Abu Talib took Buhairah's advice and they returned to Mecca.

EARLY CHARACTER

Muhammad had grown into a quiet, thoughtful youth preferring to look after his uncle's sheep rather than playing with the other children of Mecca. He loved the peace and tranquility of the valleys and mountainside and whilst tending his uncle’s flock would pass his time observing and marveling at the wonders of the creation of Allah. Like all boys of the Koraysh tribe he

was taught the art of manhood and how best to defend himself. Muhammad had very keen eyesight and so it wasn't surprising that he became an excellent archer like his ancestor Prophet Ishmael. His reputation for being honest, trustworthy and among other fine qualities, intelligent, was recognized by all who knew him, however, it wasn't until after his prophethood that he learned to read or write.

THE WEDDING

There was to be a wedding in the city, elaborate preparations had already been made, and a fine table prepared. When Muhammad's friends learned of the festivities they were anxious to join in all the fun and rushed to find Muhammad to ask him to go with them. Festivities such as these did not attract him very much but his friends wanted him to go with him and he was not a person to disappoint anyone so he agreed to accompany them. As they neared the bride's house the sound of music grew louder and louder. Suddenly, Muhammad was overcome by extreme tiredness so he told his friends to go on without him, and shortly thereafter fell sound asleep and didn't wake up until the following day when all the festivities were over.

THE AGE OF IGNORANCE

The situation in Arabia had deteriorated to such an extent that murder, lewdness, profanity, gambling and drunkenness in conjunction with other depravities had become common. The poor and weak were treated very badly and the position of women was quite deplorable. Many women were deprived of all their rights, they could be bought and sold at whim, and if they happened to inherit, their wealth was, more likely than not, ceased by their spouse. To many, the greatest shame for a woman was to give birth to a daughter. She alone was blamed and disgrace fell upon the family and all too often innocent baby girls were buried alive or even strangled at birth. Most tribes knew little or no form of government, each tribe was independent from the other except for the occasional alliance; as a result rivalries and deep rooted jealously often prevailed. Tribal feuds were common and all too often the origin of the feud had faded from memory but that was of no consequence, a feud was a feud, and therefore it was perpetuated without regard from one generation to the next resulting in the shedding of much blood. As for the Ka'ba, it now housed over 360 idols and fortune-tellers were consulted for both major and trivial decisions. Superstition was now a way of life and very few knew how to read or write -- it was a dark age -- the age of ignorance.

THE BATTLE OF FIJAR

Muhammad was fifteen years of age when a clash between the tribes of Koraysh under the command of Harb, Ummaya's son and the Banu Huwazin erupted. Since the time of Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, certain months of the years had been held sacred. During these months physical hostilities between the tribes had become strictly forbidden. However, the

rule was broken when Al Barrad, Kais Al Kinani's son, killed Urwah Al Rahal, Utbah Al Huwazini's son. The battle that ensued became known as the "Battle of Fijar" because it took place during the forbidden months. Abu Talib took part in the fighting which was destined to erupt spasmodically over a period of four years, however, Muhammad did not take part, rather, he gathered stray arrows for his uncle.

THE TREATY OF FUDUL

After the recent battle the chieftains of the divided tribe of Koraysh known as the "Perfumed Ones" and the "Confederates" put aside their differences and met together in the house of Abdullah, Judan's son. They realized that if they were to show any sign of weakness between them it could result in either party falling prey to an enemy, and in the long term bring about the fall of the Koraysh tribe. There was also another important factor to take care of that related to the protection of the harmed and the rescue of not only of the weak living in Mecca but also the visitors who suffered injustice on account of their weakened position. All who were present took an oath that from that day onward they would take them under their protection and ensure that the injured party received their rights. This treaty was indeed a landmark as injustice was rampant. Such was the importance of this treaty that the Prophet (sa) later told his companions, "Indeed, I witnessed with my uncles, in the house of Abdullah Judan's son, a treaty which is more beloved to me than a herd of cattle. Now in Islam, if I were to be asked to partake in something similar, I would accept." Those that participated in the treaty were the descendants of Hashim, Muttalib, Abd Manaf, Asad, Zuhra and Tamin together with the young Muhammad and his uncles. Abu Bakr, who was in later years to become one of the most sincere and dearest friends of the Prophet (sa), together with his and his father Abu Kuhafah of Taym were also participants.

THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE TREATY

Amongst the Koraysh tribes known as "Confederates" was that of Sahm. It was from that tribe that a man of note agreed to purchase some valuable goods from a merchant visiting Mecca from Yemen. The deal was struck, the tribesman of Sahm received his goods, but then refused to pay the agreed price. Although the merchant from Yemen was far from home and had no fellow tribesmen to support him, he was not daunted by the weakness of his position. He climbed to the top of Abu Kubays, a nearby hill on which the Black Stone which now graced the wall of Ka'ba had been found, and appealed to those present about the unjust transaction. His plaint fell upon the ears of Abdullah, Judan's son, chief of Taym who offered the use of his house to hear the matter, and so a meeting was convened. Notables from both the "Perfumed Ones" and the "Confederates" gathered together in his house to hear the complaint whereupon the tribesman from Sahm was ordered to pay his debt and those allied to his tribe who were not present at the recent oath-taking raised no objection.

TRADE

By now, Muhammad was a young man. The caravan journeys he had made with his uncle had taught him many things, so it was natural that he too should take to trading as a livelihood. There were those in Mecca who gained much wealth through trading. Some of them, for one reason or another, choose not to accompany the caravans on their missions, preferring to entrust their goods and money to a caravaner who would in return be given a share of the profit. However, reliable, trustworthy people had become increasingly difficult to find. Muhammad's word was his bond, his reputation for fairness, honesty and trustworthiness were known by all in Mecca so when he took to trading, Meccan businessmen welcomed him as their profit-sharing partner. It was not only with their trade that the Meccans trusted him. They trusted him completely in the knowledge that anything placed in his safe-keeping would be returned without decrease. One might have expected that he would have been paid a fee for such service, however he never requested, desired, nor accepted a fee. His inherent sense of fairness dictated that receiving a fee would ultimately detract from the value of the person’s wealth. Such was his impeccable reputation that both businessmen and tribesmen would refer to him as "Al Amin", the trustworthy. It was through Muhammad’s example of fair-trading that, in later years, his companions emulated his practice and became very successful in all aspects of commerce. Those who traded with them, be they Muslim or non-Muslim in Arabia or in other countries, knew that they could rely upon their trading partner and would never be cheated.

THE UNSETTLED TRANSACTION

Muhammad had negotiated a business transaction with a man by the name of Abdullah, however, part of the transaction remained unsettled, so it was agreed that the two should meet again to finalize the matter on a specific day. The matter slipped Abdullah's memory and Muhammad waited patiently for him to arrive for three days. On the third day when Abdullah finally arrived, Muhammad neither raised his voice nor did he take offense at being kept waiting, the only comment he made was that he had been concerned for him on account of his delayed arrival. This degree of tolerance and concern were indeed very rare qualities to be found in Arabs of that day. It was not in Muhammad’s nature to quarrel nor yet to turn anyone away. In fact the more impertinent and ill-tempered a person behaved towards him, the more tolerant and graceful he became. Later on during his prophethood, the sincere followers of prophets Moses and Jesus, made it known that this characteristic, together with his description and other signs, were written in their Holy Books so that they might easily recognize and follow the last Prophet of the Creator.

CHAPTER 12 MARRIAGE

KHADIJAH, DAUGHTER OF KHUWAULID

Among the traders of Mecca was a well respected, honorable, refined, wealthy widowed lady named Khadijah. She was very beautiful and had many suitors, however, she declined their

offers of marriage. Abu Talib suggested to his nephew, who was now twenty-four, that he might wish to contact Khadijah to ask whether she might like him to trade on her behalf. Muhammad, having dealt only with male traders, was somewhat respectfully shy to ask her, so he told his uncle that perhaps she would contact him if she needed his services. When news of the conversation reached Khadijah, who was twelve years his senior. She told those close to her that if she had only known he was willing to trade with her wealth she would have offered him the opportunity long before, and so a messenger was sent to invite him to come to her house and discuss arrangements. When Khadijah met Muhammad she respectfully asked if he would take it upon himself to act on her behalf with her merchandize. She told him that she had already learned of his reputation for honesty, truthfulness and knew of his high morality. Muhammad, agreed and as a mark of appreciation she told him she would gift him with twice the usual amount. Muhammad accepted and thanked Khadijah for her generosity and returned to his uncle to tell him the good news. His uncle was delighted and told him Allah had sent him this blessing. Just before the end of the month of Dhul Hijjah, Muhammad, in the company of Khadijah's devoted servant Maysarah, set out on his first trip. Upon reaching a placed called Tayma, Muhammad and Maysarah sat down to rest under the shade of a tree not far from the hermitage of a monk named Nastura, who, surprisingly rushed out to greet him. After the exchange of greetings, Nastura kissed Muhammad's head and feet then said, "I believe you, and bear witness that you are the one Allah mentioned in the Torah." When Nastura saw the mark between his shoulders, he kissed him yet again and bore witness that Muhammad was to become none other than the Messenger of Allah, the illiterate prophet of whom Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, had prophesied would come. Then, he turned to Maysarah and told him, "He is the last Prophet, I wish I could be with him when he is called!" Maysarah was taken aback by Nastura's statement, it was indeed something to tell his mistress. After taking their farewells Muhammad and Maysarah continued on their way to Basra and as the heat of the mid-day sun blazed down, Maysarah noticed clouds, driven by two invisible angels, casting their continuous, protective shade over his companion. When they reached their destination Muhammad concluded his commerce and wasted no time setting off back to Mecca. Many days passed before they reached the familiar outskirts of Mecca then, at long last, they finally reached Khadijah's house around mid-day. Just before their arrival Khadijah, who had been resting in an upper room, happened to glance out of her window and saw them returning riding on their camels, then, to her amazement as she looked up into the sky she saw the clouds drifting above Muhammad, shading him from the intense heat of the sun. After the camels had been attended Muhammad went to greet Khadijah and tell her of the trades he had made; to her surprise she found her commerce had doubled. Khadijah, true to her word kept her promise and gave Muhammad his handsome gift. Later, Khadijah spoke to Maysarah about the matter of the clouds and he too confirmed he had seen the same thing throughout the journey. He also related the bewildering conversation and witnessing of the hermit monk, Nastura, and told of the many blessings they encountered upon their journey.

THE MARRIAGE BETWEEN MUHAMMAD AND KHADIJAH

Khadijah had been deeply moved and impressed by the things Maysarah told her. Her cousin,

Warakah, who was well versed in the scriptures, also spoke highly of him and so she sent her friend, Nufaysah, to discreetly inquire why he had not married. His reply was simple, it was because he had very little money to support a wife and family. Nufaysah asked him if he would consider marrying a rich, beautiful lady of noble birth, whereupon Muhammad inquired who the lady might be and was told it was Khadijah. Muhammad was very happy, he respected Khadijah as she was known among the ladies of the Koraysh as the "Mistress of the Koraysh" and "Al Tahirah" - the pure. Muhammad went to Abu Talib to tell of the proposal, and they, together with Hamza went to ask Khadijah's uncle for her hand in marriage as her father has passed away. Khadijah's uncle, Amr, Asad's son gave his permission and the day of the wedding was set. On the day of their marriage Muhammad released Barakah, his maid, from service. Shortly after Barakah married a man from Yathrib and later gave birth to a son named Ayman, however, in the years to come Barakah was to return to the Prophet's household.

CHAPTER 13 ZAYD

As part of his wedding gift, Khadijah gave her husband the services of a youth name Zayd from the tribe of Kalb in Syria. Several years before, Zayd's mother had taken her son to visit her family in the tribe of Tayy. During their visit the village had been raided by marauders from the tribe of Bani Kayn and amongst their plunder they seized Zayd then sold him in Mecca. Zayd's father, Haritha, had led a search party to find his son, but the search proved unsuccessful -- there was no trace whatsoever of him and he feared the worst. Khadijah and Muhammad had been married for only a few months when the pilgrimage season began and soon pilgrims from all over Arabia and beyond came to Mecca. It was in that year that tribesmen from Kalb decided to partake in the pilgrimage and by chance Zayd happened to see and recognized some of them. Zayd knew his parents would have grieved over his loss. At first, he too had been devastated at being torn from his parents, but nowadays his circumstances had changed and he was very happy living in the household of Muhammad. However, now that the opportunity presented itself he was able to send his parents a comforting message via the pilgrims. Members of Zayd's family were recognized as master poets so he composed a verse conveying the news that he was alive, happy and well. The verse told them not to grieve for him any longer because he lived near the Holy Ka'ba with a blessed and noble family. As soon as the pilgrims reached home they went straight to Haritha and delivered the poem. Haritha was overjoyed to receive news that his son was alive and immediately ordered mounts to be made ready for himself and his brother to ride to Mecca to ransom his son. Upon reaching Mecca they inquired the way to the house of Muhammad and when they reached it earnestly begged him to allow them to ransom Zayd. Haritha was prepared to offer any amount of money to free his son, however, they were surprised when Muhammad told them that if Zayd wished to return with them he was free to do so and the payment of a ransom was unnecessary. Zayd was sent for and asked if he recognized the two men standing before him. Zayd was overjoyed to see his father and uncle again and confirmed that they were indeed his family. Then, Muhammad asked if he wished to return with them or

to remain with him in his household. The reply Zayd's father and uncle were about to hear astounded them, Zayd replied that he wished to remain as he was happy where he was. Zayd's father could not comprehend how anyone, let alone his own son, could choose the life of a servant to that of a freeman, but Zayd respectfully told them that he did not wish it otherwise. Upon hearing these touching words, Muhammad took Zayd by the hand and went to the Ka'ba. There he announced Zayd's freedom saying, "All those who are present, bear witness that Zayd is as my son, I am his heir and he is mine." Haritha and his brother returned home and told their fellow tribesmen of Zayd's decision. They recounted the circumstances and the great bond they had witnessed between Muhammad and Zayd, and told them that Zayd was a freeman.

THE DAILY LIFE OF MUHAMMAD AND KHADIJAH

Muhammad’s marriage with Khadijah was very happy and blissful. He continued to manage Khadijah's affairs with great skill and her business flourished bringing further wealth to the household. Despite the abundance of wealth, Muhammad choose to live a simple life giving most of his away to those in need. Muhammad’s aunt, Saffiyah, Abd Muttalib's daughter, and sister of Hamza, married a relative of Khadijah and visited with them often taking her son, Zubair, whom she had named after her elder brother, with her. When Khadijah became pregnant, Saffiyah offered the services of her own maid Salma, to assist with the birth. Khadijah gratefully accepted and so Salma became the midwife to all of the children born to them. Their sons names were Kasim and Abdullah -- who was also known as Al Tahir or Al Tayyib -- and their daughters were named Zaynab, Rukiyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatima. However, their sons were not destined to live long. Kasim died shortly before his second birthday, and Abdullah died during infancy shortly after his father became the Seal of the Prophets of Allah, (sa).

CHAPTER 14 KA'BA

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF KA'BA

Muhammad was thirty-five when a fire broke out in the Ka'ba, causing a weakness to its walls. Thereafter, the already unstable walls were weakened yet again by a tremendous flood which engulfed the Ka'ba. The Koraysh were deeply concerned about its condition and felt it necessary to demolish it completely then rebuild it using the same stones. They also proposed to make it larger and to add a roof -- before that time the Ka'ba was roofless. All agreed that its reconstruction must be funded with pure money, money gained unlawfully such as that earned by interest, prostitution and such like was automatically rejected. Such was the deep rooted reverence for the Ka'ba that the Koraysh feared their actions might be deemed sacrilegious. Although their intentions were honorable, they remembered what had happened to Abraha when he tried to raze it to the ground some thirty-five years before. This fear was greatly increased when a large serpent was seen slithering out of Ka'ba each day and then

sunning itself against its walls. When anyone attempted to approach it, it would raise itself up in readiness to strike and hiss violently at the intruder. Then, one day whilst the serpent was sunning itself, Allah sent an eagle that swooped down, seized it and flew off with it in its talons. The Koraysh were deeply relieved by this sign and their hearts were satisfied that their intention to rebuild Ka'ba had been approved. The Koraysh were about to start upon its reconstruction when news came that a ship had been wrecked off the coast near Jeddah, whereupon one of their tribesmen named Walid, Mughira's son, hastened to Jeddah to purchase its salvageable timber. One of the ship's survivors was a Roman mason named Bakum, so Walid procured his services and together they journeyed back to Mecca with the timber for Ka'ba. The first person to start removing the stones was Abu Wahb, brother of Fatima, but, as soon as he picked up the stone, it leapt out of his hands and returned to its original position. The greatly perturbed the onlookers were afraid to continue with the work, however, Walid supplicated to Allah saying, "O Allah, we intend nothing but good," and then started to demolish part of the wall near the Black Stone. This time nothing happened, but the tribesmen were reluctant to continue and agreed that they should wait overnight to see if anything happened to Walid. The consensus was that if nothing happened to him then they would continue with the proposed work knowing that Allah was pleased with their actions, but, on the other hand if something happened to him before sunrise they would know their actions were not acceptable in which case they would just reinforce its walls. Sunrise came and nothing had happened to Walid so work resumed. When it came to the removal of the Black Stone, a Syriac inscription -- the language of Prophet Abraham -- was unearthed. No one knew what it said so it was put to one side and shown later on to a knowledgeable Jew. To the wonder of all the deciphered inscription read: 'I am Allah, the Lord of Becca, I created her the day I created the heavens and the earth, the day I formed the sun and the moon, and I placed round about her seven inviolable angels. She shall stand so long as her two hills stand, blessed for her people with milk and water.' After a lot of effort they reached the foundations Prophet Abraham laid so many centuries before and came across large, round, greenish colored stones. A tribesman, using a lever, tried to lift one of the stones, but as he did the stone quaked and its shudders were felt throughout Mecca so the stones were left alone. Everyone took it as a sign that these stones should remain undisturbed. Near the door of Ka'ba lay and still lies, a small rock. Miraculously imprinted in the rock is the footprint of Prophet Abraham. During the reconstruction of Ka'ba another inscription was found beneath the rock that read: 'Ka'ba, the Holy House of Allah. Her sustenance comes to her from three directions. Do not let her people be the first to profane her.' Amongst those who took part in the rebuilding was Muhammad. In those days it was the custom of builders to raise the lower portion of their garments above their head when building. Shyly, Muhammad was about to do the same when he was prevented. He fell to the ground and heard an angel call reminding him, "Your privates". This was the first occasion an angel had spoken to him. Upon picking himself up his uncle advised him to raise his garment above his head but Muhammad declined telling him that the reason he had fallen was to prevent his privates from being seen. As the rebuilding progressed new stones were added to the original stones to make the Ka'ba higher; before its rebuilding its height had been approximately that of a man. Work on the reconstruction continued to go well until it was time for the repositioning of the Black Stone.

Each tribal chieftain was anxious to receive the honor its placing and so inevitably a heated dispute arose between them. The dispute continued for four days and nights without a decision being reached and tempers neared breaking point. It was obvious that none of the chieftains would relinquish their right to place the stone. After much deliberation it was accepted by all that they would let the first person to enter the precincts of Ka'ba place the stone. The first person to enter was Muhammad, everyone was delighted, his character was impeccable and no one raised the slightest objection so they went and informed him of his most honorable role. Muhammad was guided by blessed wisdom that was to satisfy everyone. He asked for a piece of cloth to be spread out on the ground, then, placed the Black Stone in the middle and asked the chief of each tribe to take hold of the cloth, raise and carry it to the corner of the eastern wall of Ka'ba. Each took hold of the cloth and carried it, then, when they reached the corner, Muhammad picked it up and positioned it, just as his blessed ancestor, Prophet Abraham, had done so many centuries before. The honor of each tribe was secured and everyone was happy with the solution. It was around that time that Muhammad started to receive visions, all of which were to materialized shortly after.

CHAPTER 15 ALI, SON OF ABU TALIB

There was one year in particular when many areas, including Mecca, were stricken by drought followed by inevitable famine. Abu Talib, Muhammad’s uncle, had a large family, but by now some of his children had married and left home. However, the drought had made it all but impossible for him to provide adequately for those still remaining at home. Muhammad realized the hardship his uncle and family faced so he went to Abbas and suggested that they should each take one of Abu Talib's sons into their own household until matters improved. Without hesitation, Abbas and his wife, Umm Al Fadl, agreed so they went to Abu Talib to ask his permission. Their proposal was gratefully accepted and it was agreed that Abbas should take Jaffar and that Muhammad should take Ali into their homes. Ali was around the same age as Muhammad’s daughters, and so they played happily together under the supervision of Zayd.

THE GIFT OF KHADIJAH

The land of the Bani Sa’ad, the vicinity in which Muhammad had been raised, suffered greatly on account of the drought. Whenever Halima visited Mecca she would make a point of visiting with Muhammad and his family. Khadijah always welcomed her and her visits caused great joy among the family, but this time it was obvious something was troubling Halima. The drought had caused her to loose almost all her livestock and when Khadijah learned of her plight she, without a moment’s hesitation, gave her forty of her own sheep as well as a healthy, strong camel to ease her situation.

THE MARRIAGE OF THREE DAUGHTERS

Muhammad’s uncle Abu Lahab was a prominent figure amongst the Koraysh, however, even at this early stage he was not as close to Muhammad as the rest of his uncles. However, Abu Lahab recognized the high regard people had for his nephew and proposed the marriage of his two sons Utba and Utayba to Muhammad’s daughters Rukiyah and Umm Kulthum. The proposals were accepted, however, the marriages remained unconsummated. Lady Khadijah thought the match between their daughter Zaynab and her nephew Al As, Rabi's son would be a happy union and so she discussed the matter with her husband. Muhammad was agreeable for he never opposed Khadijah's wishes and so the young couple were married.

CHAPTER 16 THE PROPHETHOOD

Just outside Mecca lies a mountain called Mount Hira and it was there that Muhammad would often retreat to one of its cave to contemplate and worship Allah alone through the means of mediation. The formal way in which his ancestors, Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, had worshipped were long forgotten and he knew no other way of worship. During the month of Ramadan, it had become his custom to make a special retreat to the cave taking with him some water and dates for his provision. When Khadijah thought his provisions might be getting low she would either go there herself or send her maid to bring him fresh supplies. The affairs Muhammad observed in Mecca troubled him deeply, but most of all he abhorred the increased worship of the idols placed in and around Ka'ba, for he had never been an idolater, he directed his worship to the One and only God, Allah, who created and creates all things. Muhammad was now forty years old and the month of Ramadan had come around again, so he made his way once more up to the cave. And it was there during his retreat, on the 27th day of Ramadan, that Allah sent the Arch Angel Gabriel to him. Prophet Muhammad (sa) was deeply disturbed when Gabriel appeared, and tried to look away, but no matter which direction he turned his face, the angel filled the horizon. Then, the angel spoke commanding him to read. Prophet Muhammad (sa) had never learned to read and respectfully replied, "I cannot read" whereupon Gabriel took him and pressed him firmly to him and commanded him again to read. Once again the Prophet (sa) respectfully replied saying, "I cannot read." Gabriel took the Prophet (sa) yet again and pressed him firmly to him but this time when he released him he commanded him saying,

"Read in the Name of your Lord who created, created the human from a (blood) clot. Read! Your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the pen, taught the human what he did not know." Koran Chapter 96 verses 1-5

and so the Prophet (sa) recited the words exactly as the angel had taught him. The verses he had been given were indelibly written deep into his very being and Gabriel departed. The event was of tremendous proportion and constantly consumed his thoughts but at the same time he was a little concerned that perhaps he had been visited by a bad spirit or an evil jinn. In haste, the Prophet (sa), left the cave and as he made his way down the mountainside towards his home when he met Khadijah climbing up the mountain with fresh provisions. As

soon as he saw her he exclaimed with respect in plurality, "Zammiluni, Zammiluni " meaning "You all, cover me, cover me!" Khadijah had never seen him like this before and he told her of his experience in the cave then of his thoughts. Khadijah tried her best to comfort and reassure him telling him that she was certain his concern was unfounded and that the event was nothing other than good tidings from Allah. She reassured him saying that Allah would never disappoint him because he was not only good to his family, but to those in need, and reminded him that he always spoke the truth and whenever asked he would comfort and help people solve their problems and then again, he was always hospitable. Lady Khadijah had an elderly cousin by the name of Warakah, Nawfal's son who was knowledgeable of the Scriptures. He had studied both the Torah and the Gospel and became a Nazarene many years before, but now his sight had failed and blindness overtook him, so she suggest that they should go to him and tell him exactly what had happened and ask his authoritative opinion. Warakah, like a handful of other people knowledgeable of the Scriptures, felt sure from their learning that the time was imminent for the coming of the last Prophet of Allah. He remembered the prophecy of Jesus, peace be upon him, to his disciples, "But now I go my way to Allah who sent me, and none of you asketh me, 'Whither goest thou?' But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter (Prophet Muhammad) will not come unto you; but if I depart, he will be sent unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of its lack of righteousness, and judgment. Nevertheless when he, the Spirit of Truth (Gabriel) is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he (Prophet Muhammad) shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." Bible, New Testament John 58:80-82

and so Warakah listened intently to the events the Holy Prophet (sa) described. Warakah had no doubt whatsoever in his mind that Muhammad had been chosen to be the last Prophet of Allah (sa) and informed him that the angel that appeared to him was the same as he who had visited Prophet Moses and that it was none other than the Arch Angel Gabriel. Warakah told the Prophet (sa) how much he wished he could have been a youth when the order came from Allah for him to preach His Message, and warned that he would have to migrate from Mecca. The Prophet (sa) was surprised by Warakah's comment and asked, "Will I have to migrate?" Warakah confirmed what he had said saying, "Yes, there has never been a man who brought what you are going to come with that has not been the target of his enemies, but, if I am alive when your time comes, I will be your strong supporter."

CHAPTER 17 THE REVELATION, RANK OF THE PROPHETS, MESSENGERS AND THE ARCH ANGEL GABRIEL

The night before Prophet Muhammad, (sa) received the first revelation in the cave, Allah sent the Holy Koran from the protected tablet "Al Lawh Al Muhfz" to be lodged in the lower heavens in the House of Honor and there it remained until Allah commanded its verses and chapters to be sent down at their predetermined time. The Revelation of the Holy Koran took

place over a period of twenty-three years, sometimes with long intervals between their sending. Allah refers to this great event in Chapter 97 of the Koran:

"We sent this (the Holy Koran) down on the Night of Honor. What could let you know what the Night of Honor is! The Night of Honor is better than a thousand months, in that the angels and the Spirit (Gabriel) descend by the permission of their Lord upon every command. Peace it is, till the break of dawn."

Allah refers to it again in the Koran, Chapter 2 verse 185

"The month of Ramadan is the month in which the Koran was sent down, a guidance for people, and clear verses of guidance and the criterion ..."

Until the advent of Prophet Muhammad, (sa) each prophet had been sent for their own specific nation -- they were not sent to save the whole of humanity. In one of his sermons Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, spoke of his own particular mission in the New Testament, "He answered, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel." (Matthew 24 40:15), in other words, the sincere Jews who were trying to follow the true teachings of Moses but found it difficult to do so on account of the corrupt teachings of erring rabbis who better served and feared their secular masters rather than their Creator. The mission of Prophet Muhammad, (sa) was not to be restricted to the Arab nation but for all nations of the world. He was sent with a Book, -- Al Koran -- that Allah, in His Mercy has promised to protect from any form of corruption.

"It is We who sent down the Koran, and We watch over it." Koran Chapter 15 verse 9

Before the prophets were sent to their respective nations, each took a covenant with Allah:

"'And when Allah took the covenant of the Prophets: ‘That I have given you of the Book and Wisdom. Then there shall come to you a Messenger (Muhammad) confirming what is with you, you shall believe in him, and you shall support him, to be victorious, do you agree and take My load this?' They answered: 'We do agree.' Allah said: 'Then bear witness, and I will be with you among the witnesses.'" Koran Chapter 3 verse 81

The rank of the Arch Angel Gabriel is that of the highest of all angels. It is he who received the honor of delivering the Scriptures to all the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, from the time of Adam up until the Seal of the Prophets, Prophet Muhammad and visited Mary, the mother of Prophet Jesus, bringing her the news of her miraculous conception, peace be upon all the prophets and their righteous families. Amongst authentic Islamic records are that Gabriel visited Prophet Adam twelve times, Prophet Idris four times, Prophet Noah fifty times, Prophet Job three times, Prophet Moses four hundred times, Prophet Jesus ten times - thrice when he was young and seven times after he reached the age of maturity - and that he visited

Prophet Muhammad on twenty-four thousand occasions during which time he delivered the Divine Revelation, the Koran that contains 6236 verses as well as 12,000 prophetic quotations. We also know that he visited Prophet Ishmael at least once when Gabriel struck his feet on the ground and Zamzam started to flow, and at least once to Prophet Joseph when he was thrown into the well by his brothers. Peace be upon all the prophets.

CHAPTER 18 THE MIRACULOUS KORAN

When Allah intended His special miracles to be demonstrated by His Prophets, He created something similar, yet clearly superior to the highly acclaimed skills of that day. To all but the proud, the miracles He sent were clearly recognizable and accepted as such by practitioner and layman alike. For example, during the time of Moses and Pharaoh, sorcery and magic had reached its highest peak. To prove to Pharaoh and his nation that Prophet Moses had been sent with the truth, Allah caused the Staff of Moses, as well as other miracles, to turn into a serpent and devour the magical snakes of the sorcerers. When the sorcerers saw the miracle they surrendered immediately to the truth, knowing well that the miracle was a reality whereas their skills were nothing other than trickery. Another example is that of the miracles given to Jesus. Prophet Jesus was sent at a time when the art of healing had reached an extremely high level. Among the healing miracles Allah permitted him was that he might raise the dead, and heal the sick from incurable diseases. Physician and layman alike witnessed these miracles and knew that they were not the skills of a skillful physician, rather, they were divine, holy miracles given to him by his Creator. Earlier, we spoke of the pride Arabs took in their language and of the prestigious rank of a poet within their tribe. At no time in the history of Arabia had the science of language been greater or more eloquent. Annual poetry competitions were held in Mecca and elsewhere in Arabia to which people flocked just to listen to the beauty of the language and perhaps partake. Although Prophet Muhammad, (sa) was given many great miracles the greatest miracle given to him, was the Holy Koran for its composition, grammar, eloquence and fineries surpasses the work of any author or poet. Allah issues a challenge in the Koran to anyone to compose a chapter or even just a verse of the same quality and beauty to those in His Koran and at the same time warns that no one will ever be able to do so. In His Mercy, Allah has promised to keep the Koran free from alteration or corruption. The miracle of the Koran was and still is apparent to all whose ego does not resist.

"If you are in doubt of what We have sent down to Our worshipper (Prophet Muhammad), produce a chapter comparable to it. Call upon your helpers, other than Allah, to assist you, if you are true. But if you fail, as you are sure to fail, then guard yourselves against the Fire whose fuel is people and stones prepared for the unbelievers." Koran Chapter 2 verses 23:24

Prophet Muhammad, (sa) was also given miracles both similar and superior to those of Prophets Jesus and Moses, peace be upon them.

CHAPTER 19 THE EARLY REVELATIONS

Not long after the Prophet (sa) received the first verses of the Revelation he received another. This time it was a single letter with a mystical meaning. Later on during the Revelations the Prophet received other mystical letters. The next time Prophet Muhammad, (sa) received verses they included a Divine Oath of reassurance, these verses were also preceded by one of the mystical letters, the letter "nuun".

"Nuun. By the Pen and that (the angels) write, you are not, because of the favor of your Lord, mad. Indeed, there is an unfailing wage for you. Surely, you (Prophet Muhammad) are of a great morality ..." Koran Chapter 68 verses 1 - 4

There was to be a long interval between these last verses and the sending down of the next, whereupon, the Prophet (sa) was concerned thinking that perhaps he had done something to displease Allah. Lady Khadijah tried her best to console and reassure him, but now that Warakah had passed away there was no one else except her to turn to. Then, the much awaited Revelations resumed once more and again it contained a Divine Oath that laid to rest his concern and comforted both his heart and soul. It was in this Revelation he received the order to preach, telling of the favors of his Lord.

"By the mid-morning, and by the night when it covers, your Lord has not forsaken you (Prophet Muhammad), nor does He hate you. The Last shall be better for you than the First. Your Lord will give you, and you will be satisfied. Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter? Did He not find you a wanderer so He guided you? Did He not find you poor and suffice you? Do not oppress the orphan, nor drive away the one who asks. But tell of the favors of your Lord!" Koran, Chapter 93

CHAPTER 20 THE FIRST TO BELIEVE

Now that Prophet Muhammad, (sa) had received the instruction to tell of the favors of his Lord, he spoke to Lady Khadijah in depth about Allah. Lady Khadijah recognized the truth and became the first to embrace Islam. In those early days of Islam, the Prophet (sa) confined his preaching to his immediate family. At the time Lady Khadijah embraced Islam, Prophet Muhammad, (sa) had not received instructions as to the manner in which he should offer his prayers. Then, one day on the outskirts of Mecca, Angel Gabriel came to him and struck the ground with his heels. From the indentation, a spring of water began to flow and the Angel showed the Prophet (sa) the ritual cleansing procedure he should make before offering his prayer. Now that the Prophet (sa) had learned how to perform the ritual ablution, Angel Gabriel taught him how to offer his prayers with its postures of standing, bowing, prostrating, and sitting which was the same way in which his great ancestors, Prophets Abraham and Ishmael has offered their prayers so many centuries before. He informed him that he should commence the prayer with the words "Allahu Akbar" -- Allah is the Greatest, and to conclude

the prayer by turning the head first to the right then saying "As-Salaamu alaykum" -- peace be upon you -- and then to repeat the same to the left. Thereafter, Gabriel departed and the Prophet (sa) returned home to teach Lady Khadijah and together they offered their prayer in unison.

ALI EMBRACES ISLAM

One day, Ali, Abu Talib's son, who had lived with them since the time of the famine, entered the room and found the Prophet and Lady Khadijah praying together. As soon as they concluded their prayer Ali asked what they were doing whereupon he was told that they were praising and giving thanks to Allah, then, the Prophet (sa) spoke to him about Islam. Ali was struck by the things he learned. He thought deeply about them and was unable to sleep that night. The following morning Ali went to the Prophet (sa) to tell him that he believed and wanted to follow him. And so Ali, at the tender age of ten, became the first male to embrace Islam. Abu Bakr, who had been a friend of the Prophet (sa) for many years was next. He was a very amiable, tender-hearted man from the tribe of Taym, respected not only by his own tribe but by others. He had gained a reputation for offering sound advice and interpreting visions, therefore it was not uncommon for tribesmen to consult and confide in him. Whenever circumstances presented themselves Abu Bakr would speak to those whom he trusted about the Prophet (sa) and his message. Amongst those who were receptive were Abdu Amr and Abu Ubayda both of whom embraced Islam and changed their names to Abd Ar Rahman -- worshiper of the Merciful. THE VISION OF KHALID, SON OF SA'ID

One day, Abu Bakr received an unexpected visit from Khalid, Sa'ids son. It was obvious from Khalid's face that something was worrying him. Khalid took Abu Bakr to one side and told him that as he slept he had seen a very disturbing vision and knew it should not be dismissed. Khalid told Abu Bakr that in his vision he had seen his father trying to push him into a very deep, raging pit of fire and of a violent struggle he had with him. He was about to fall when suddenly, he felt a strong pair of hands grip him tightly around his waist and that he was sure that if it had not been for those hands he would have undoubtedly been pushed into the fire. Khalid told Abu Bakr that when he looked round to see who had saved him, he saw the hands were none other than those of Prophet Muhammad (sa), and then vision vanished. Abu Bakr's face lit up as he told Khalid that Muhammad had become the Prophet of Allah, (sa) and that if he followed him he would indeed be protected from the burning fires of Hell. Khalid was awe struck and made straight for the house of the Prophet (sa) to ask him about the message he had been given. After listening intently he embraced Islam. However, the Prophet (sa) told him that for the time being he should keep the matter a secret from the rest of his family. Abdullah, Masood's son was a shepherd who tended a flock of sheep belonging to Ukba, Abd Muayt's son. One day when the Prophet (sa) and Abu Bakr were passing they stopped and asked him for a cup of milk. Abdullah told them that unfortunately the sheep did not belong to him and that he did not have any of his own to be able to offer them a cup of milk. The Prophet (sa) asked Abdullah if there happened to be a lamb that had not yet been mated in the flock. Abdullah told him that there was and went to fetch it. The lamb was set down in

front of the Prophet (sa) whereupon he massaged its udder as he supplicated to Allah. Miraculously, the udder filled with milk and they all drank. After thanking Allah they continued on their way. A few days later Abdullah went to the Prophet (sa) and embraced Islam. Later on, Allah in His Mercy, blessed Abdullah in such a way that he was able to recite by heart no less than seventy chapters of Koran with its precise diction.

OTHMAN AND TALHA

Othman, Ahllan's son, was a trader and was upon his return journey from Syria, when one night as he and his fellow caravaners slept he heard a voice saying, "O you who sleep, wake up, indeed Ahmad has come forth!" The voice with its message penetrated deep inside him and consumed his thoughts for many days. He did not know what to make of the message, and who was "Ahmad" -- which means the "praised one" and is one of Prophet's names mentioned in the previous Holy Books. As he drew near to Mecca, Talha, a cousin of Abu Bakr, caught up with the caravan and rode along with Othman. Talha had an experience similar to that of Othman. He had been on a journey that had taken him through Bostra, when, much to his surprise a monk approached him asked if "Ahmad" from the people of the Holy House had come forth. Talha was taken aback and asked the monk who "Ahmad" might be, the monk answered that his grandfather was Abd Al Muttalib and that his father was Abdullah, then he told him that it would be during that month he would appear. Talha did not know what to make of the monk's inquiry and like Othman the matter had consumed his thoughts. Talha and Othman shared their experiences with one another; both were completely bewildered and agreed that the only way to understand the meaning of these events would be to go straight to Abu Bakr upon reaching Mecca and ask him. As soon as they reached Mecca they went to Abu Bakr to tell of their experiences and he in turn took them to see the Prophet (sa) and asked them to relate their accounts. The Prophet (sa), listened then told them about Allah and that he had been called to the prophethood. Without hesitation both Othman and Talha embraced Islam.

ABU DHARR

Abu Dharr belonged to the tribe of Bani Ghifar, and had defended his rights in many hold-ups. He was also amongst the first to convert to Islam. Abu Dharr had heard that a man from Mecca laid claim to being a prophet, so he asked his brother to go to Mecca and bring back news of him, so dutifully, his brother left for Mecca. Upon his return Abu Dharr asked him what he had heard, whereupon his brother told him that he had heard him advocating goodness and forbidding evil. Abu Dharr was not satisfied with this meager amount of information so he gathered his water-skin and stick and set off. When he reached Mecca he did not like to ask anyone straight away about him so he settled himself in the precincts of the Mosque and waited. As he waited, Ali happened to pass by and realizing he was a stranger offered him a place to stay. Abu Dharr accepted and followed Ali back to his house, but did not disclose the reason for his visit. The following morning Abu Dharr went to Ka'ba again to wait, but this time he asked about the Prophet (sa) but no one was forthcoming. Ali happened

to see him there again so he went across to him and asked why he had come to Mecca. Abu Dharr told him, in confidence, that he had heard that a Prophet had appeared in Mecca and that he had sent his brother a while before to find out more about him. However, he told Ali, his brother had returned with an answer which did not altogether satisfy him, so he had decided to journey to Mecca himself to hear more. Ali told him he had found what he had come for and to follow him at an undetectable distance to avoid any possible harassment. He also told him that if he saw someone whom he thought might bother him, he would pretend to adjust his shoe and this would be warning for him to go away. However, there was no need for concern, and Abu Dharr followed him and was at last was brought to the Prophet (sa). That same day, Abu Dharr embraced Islam and the Prophet (sa) advised him to return to his village but keep his conversion secret until he learned of their victory. But Abu Dharr was so enthused that he declared, "By Him, who has sent you with the truth, I will announce my conversion to Islam publicly!" Then, he went directly to the Ka'ba where he proclaimed for all to hear. "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger." The Koraysh tribesmen were infuriated and almost beat Abu Dharr to death and if it had not been for Abbas who threw himself between him and his assailants he would have been severely injured. Abbas rebuked the angry crowd saying, "Woe to you, do you want to kill a man from the tribe of Ghifar, when your caravans pass through their territory!!" Abu Dharr was not to be put off, and the next day he went to Ka'ba and declared his witnessing again. The same thing happened over again and Abbas intervened once more then he returned home to his tribe. Later on when the ever-increasing number of Muslims met with extreme hostility and persecution from the Koraysh Abu Dharr took to the roads once more. There he would lie in wait, ambush the Koraysh caravans and retrieve the stolen belongings and restore them to their rightful Muslim owners.

CHAPTER 21 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARLY MUSLIMS

Those who embraced Islam in its early years were seekers of the truth and by nature, upright and truthful. Living in Mecca at that time were a group of people called "Ahnaf". To them idol worship was repugnant. They tried their best to follow the way of their great ancestor, Prophet Abraham, but apart from their belief that God is One, there was little else left of the religion of Abraham to guide them and it was in this group of people that Sa'id, Zayd's son belonged. Othman, Maz'un's son had abstained from alcohol long before the advent of Islam. After embracing Islam he wished to live the life of a recluse, however, Prophet Muhammad, (sa) persuaded him otherwise. Another characteristic of the early Muslims was that none of them were from the Koraysh hierarchy which prompted the scorn of the unbelievers. Allah quotes their mockery in the Koran when they said to the believers:

"Are those whom Allah favors amongst us?" Koran Chapter 6 verse 53

Upon reflection, one remembers that the followers of previous prophets were, for the most

part, those considered by some to be on the lower and unimportant edge of society. The Holy Koran reminds how the council said to Prophet Noah:

" We see your followers are none but the lowliest amongst us, and their opinion is not to be considered. We do not see you superior to us, rather, we consider you liars." Koran Chapter 11 verse 27

The early followers of Prophet Jesus were also of the same upright nature and similar in status and his leading disciple James, was known as "James the Just".

CHAPTER 22 THE HIERARCHY OF THE KORAYSH

To gain a better understanding of the leaders and their position within the tribe of Koraysh during these early years of Islam we should know the roles of these prominent people, because each one was destined to play an important role in one way or another in the years that followed: The custodianship of the Ka'ba and keeper of its keys was Othman, Talha's son, whilst the family entrusted to look after the welfare of the pilgrims was Nuwfal, under the direction of Harith, Amir's son, whereas it was the responsibility of Abbas to provide them with water. The advisor to the Koraysh was Yazid, Rabi'a Al Aswad's son from the tribe of Asad. However, when the need came for an arbitrator, Abu Bakr was called upon. The chief of the tribe of Ummaya was Abu Sufyan, who was also its standard bearer. During times of war, Walid, Mughira's son from the tribe of Makhzum was responsible for organizing camp affairs. He also commanded the cavalry, however, when Harb, Ummaya's son died, Abu Sufyan, was thought not be sufficiently proficient to assume the command, so the position was given to Waleed who was also the uncle of the Abu Lahab, also known as Abu Jahl. Omar from the Koraysh tribe of Adi was the liaison officer. He would also decided upon important issues such as lineage. Superstition was rampant, and the chief interpreter of omens was Safwan, another son of Ummaya. The office of treasurer was administered by Harith, Kais' son from the tribe of Sahm. The chieftain of the tribe of Hashim was Abu Talib, later to be succeeded by the infamous Abu Lahab. It is important to remember that the tribes of Hashim and Ummaya were equally prominent, for many years they had been jealous of one another and acute rivalry existed between them.

CHAPTER 23 THE COMMAND TO PREACH

Three years after the Prophet (sa) received the first Revelation, Allah commanded him to extend his preaching publicly saying:

"Proclaim then, what you are commanded and turn away from the unbelievers. We suffice you against those who mock, and those who set up other gods with Allah, indeed, they will soon know. Indeed, We know your chest is straitened by that they say." Koran Chapter 15 verse 94-

97

The number of converts had risen steadily, many of whom were relatives of the Prophet (sa). However, there were many more in his large family, including four uncles who were not among them. When the Prophet (sa) received another revelation telling him:

"Warn your tribe and your near kinsmen, and lower your wing to the believers who follow you." Koran Chapter 26 verse 214-215

he thought of ways in which he could best fulfill this command. He knew that he could expect resistance from some members of his family and tribe so he concluded the best way to present Islam to them would be to invite them all to a meal and then tell them. Approximately forty invitations were delivered and the Prophet (sa) asked Ali to prepare a shoulder of lamb and a cup of milk to feed them.

THE MIRACULOUS MEAL

The uncles of the Prophet, Abu Talib, Hamza, Abbas and Abu Lahab arrived with the other guests and the Prophet (sa) asked Ali to bring the shoulder of lamb and the cup of milk he had prepared. Ali thought that the meat and milk were scarcely enough to satisfy just one man let alone forty, but the Prophet (sa) took the meat, broke it in half, put it back into the dish and invited his guests to eat saying, "Take it in the Name of Allah." Everyone ate from the shoulder and drank from the milk until their stomachs were full, not one among them remained either hungry or thirsty. This was to be amongst the first miracles of the Prophet (sa) however, before he had chance to address his guests, Abu Lahab arose exclaiming, "Your host has bewitched you!" Whereupon his guests got up and left. The next day, the Prophet (sa) asked Ali to invite them all together for another meal that very day and to prepare another shoulder of lamb and cup of milk just as he had done the day before. The invitations were accepted and once again they gathered together for another meal. After they had all sat down the Prophet (sa) supplicated then divided the meat just as he had done the last time, and they ate and drank as before. No sooner had they finished eating, the Prophet (sa) wasted no time to address them saying, "O sons of Abd Al Muttalib, I know of no Arab who has come to his people with a nobler message. I have brought you the best of this world and the next. Allah has ordered me to invite you to Him. So who will help me in this matter, my brother, my executor and successor being among you?" Silence fell heavily over the gathering and no one stirred, then, young Ali got up and went to the Prophet's side and said, "Prophet of Allah, I will be your helper in this matter." Whereupon the Prophet (sa) put his hand on the back of Ali's neck and said, "This is my brother, my executor and my successor among you. Listen to him and obey him." There was an outburst of laughter from his guests who now turned to Abu Talib and said mockingly, "He has ordered you to listen to your son and obey him!" Although Abu Talib, Hamza and Abbas had not accepted the invitation to Islam, their love and loyalty to the Prophet (sa) remained unquestioned, so it was not surprising that Abu

Talib did not object to the conversion of his children, Ali, Jaffar and Saffiayah. Saffiayah had five other sisters, but they were not as yet prepared to make a commitment, however, Abbas' wife, Umm Al Fadl was and embraced Islam.

THE INVITATION TO THE KORAYSH

One day, the Prophet climbed to the top of Safwa -- the hill Lady Hagar had once climbed centuries before in search of water -- and called the Koraysh to come and listen to the message he brought, and amongst those that came to listen was none other than his uncle Abu Lahab. Silence fell upon the crowd as the Prophet (sa) asked, "If I were to tell you that behind this hill there was a great army, would you believe me?" Without any hesitation they replied, "Yes, you have never been known to lie!" The Prophet continued, "Then I urge you to surrender to Allah because if you do not a harsh punishment will befall you." The crowd that had just testified to the truthfulness of the Prophet lost their senses, became deeply offended and left.

EARLY PHYSICAL HOSTILITY TOWARDS MUSLIMS

In order to avoid the taunts of the unbelievers, the companions would often offer their prayers in the peaceful valleys that lay just outside Mecca. It was upon one such occasion when Sa'ad, Abu Wakkas' son, in the company of several other friends, were in the midst of saying their prayers that some passersby from Mecca came across them. The passersby could not resist the temptation to make fun, so they started to jeer and insult them. The provocation worsened to the extent that it became difficult for the companions to continue with their prayer. Understandably, the believers were very upset by this unwarranted intrusion, so they asked why they weren't content to leave them alone to offer their prayer in peace. The Meccans had hoped that their provocation would prove fruitful and soon the situation got out of hand whereupon there was an exchange of blows. During the disturbance, Sa'ad happened to glance upon the ground and saw the jawbone of a camel laying there, he seized it, struck and wounded one of the Meccans; this was the first time blood had been shed by a Muslim. Later, when the Prophet (sa) learned of the encounter, he told his followers that it was better to be patient with the unbelievers until Allah commanded otherwise. Not long after, the companions were to be blessed by the offer of the use of Arkam's, house located near the hill of Safwa. At last they had a place large enough in which to gather and offer their prayers in peace and safety, far from the unwarranted hostile taunts of the Koraysh.

CHAPTER 24 THE KORAYSH AND ABU TALIB

Prophet Muhammad, (sa) was not to be deterred by the ever growing resistance to the Message he brought, and continued his preaching, inviting all who would listen to Islam. However, he was deeply saddened, and concerned that many appeared to disbelieve him when he told them that what he brought was from Allah. Thereafter, Allah sent down the

following verse that told the Prophet (sa) that it was not him they disbelieved, rather, it was the verses of Allah. "We know what they say saddens you. It is not you that they belie; but the harmdoers belie the verses of Allah." Koran, Chapter 6 verse 33

Such was their anger that a state of open hostilities began to emerge. Road blocks were set up along the routes leading into Mecca to warn pilgrims and traders not to listen to a man named Muhammad who claimed to be the Prophet of Allah and preached against their idols. However, the Koraysh miscalculated and the warnings served to arouse the curiosity of many travelers and actually helped spread the news of his arrival. There wasn't a visitor to Mecca who had not heard of the Prophet and when they returned to their homes in distant parts of Arabia and beyond they took with them the news the Koraysh had attempted to suppress, his name was about to become a household word; a topic of conversation. The Koraysh were angered by the Prophet's preaching on several counts. They hated the fact that he preached against their idols because the idols housed in and around Ka'ba attracted pilgrims by the thousands each year. Lucrative trades such as idol carving, fortune telling and their like played an important role in the economy of Mecca, and they didn't want the situation to change. However, the Sacred House together with its City had been created for the worship of the Creator, even before the creation of Adam and humanity. First the angels had built it, then, it was rebuilt later on by the jinn and restored by Prophet Abraham. There were also those steeped in the folklore of their idolatrous traditions, who, on account of pride, refused to acknowledge its value as being tantamount to nothing. To this sector, the fact that their forefathers had seen fit to practice and uphold the folklore was sufficient reason for them to continue in the same way. As such they were not prepared to question the authenticity of their heritage, rather, they chose to blindly defend the tradition their forefathers invented. Allah speaks about them in the Holy Koran saying:

"When it is said to them: 'Come to that which Allah has sent down, and to the Messenger,' they reply: 'Sufficient for us is what we found our fathers upon,' even though their fathers knew nothing and were not guided." Koran Chapter 5 verse 104

THE SUPPORT OF ABU TALIB

Although Abu Talib had not converted to Islam, he unconditionally offered his support and his love for his nephew remained unfaltering. Abu Talib would not entertain a word against him and was always his strong supporter whenever the need arose. One day, in desperation, a group of influential Koraysh approached Abu Talib to ask him to persuade his nephew to stop preaching against their idols, however, Abu Talib avoided giving a direct answer and did nothing. After a while the Koraysh realized their visit to Abu Talib had been unfruitful so they visited him yet again, but this time their visit was more forceful. This time they spoke harshly to him reminding him of his rank and honor saying, "Abu Talib! We have asked you to speak with your nephew yet you have not done so. We swear that we will neither allow our forefathers to be insulted, our ways rebuked, or our gods reviled. You must stop him or else we will fight both of you!" Having delivered their ultimatum they left in the same manner in

which they had come. Abu Talib went straight away to the Prophet (sa) to report the alarming conversation and said, "O son of my brother, spare me and yourself, do not burden me with more than I can bear." Caringly, yet saddened by the request, the Prophet (sa) answered, "I swear by Allah, if they were able to give me the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left in exchange for my abandonment of this way before He has made it victorious, or I have died on account of it, I will never do so." Abu Talib could see the deep upset of the Prophet (sa) and how certain he was of his mission that he replied, "O son of my brother, go, say what you will, because, by Allah I will never abandon you on any account."

CHAPTER 25 TUFAYL FROM THE TRIBE OF DAWS

Tufayl's tribe resided outside Mecca, he was a poet of high renown and as such had earned great respect from not only his own tribe but also that of others. It became necessary for Tufayl to journey to Mecca, so he set out on his journey to the City. As he neared Mecca he was stopped by a party of the Koraysh blocking the road. The Koraysh warned Tufayl about the Prophet, whom they now described as being, amongst other things, a sorcerer. The frightening things the Koraysh said disturbed him to the extent that upon reaching Mecca he plugged his ears tightly with cotton to protect and prevent him from hearing anything. When he reached Mecca, the familiar sounds of passersby and the market place were now silenced on account of the cotton placed firmly in his ears and he felt at ease. For many years it had been Tufayl's custom to visit the Ka'ba and circumambulate it before attending to business. As he entered the precincts of Ka'ba he noticed a lone figure standing near the Black Stone offering his prayer. It was never the practice of the Prophet (sa) to offer his prayer in a loud manner, and this prayer was no exception, yet Allah, allowed his quiet recitation to penetrate the cotton with which Tufayl had plugged his ears. Tufyal knew well the intricacies of the Arabic language and was captivated by the compelling beauty and rhythm of the verses. He had heard many poets recite most excellent poetry, but the composition and arrangement of these words with their message was quite the most beautiful and certainly unique. He had never heard anything that could be remotely compared to the verses he now heard. Suddenly, he remembered the warning, but Allah caused reason to prevail. Tufayl knew he was able to distinguish between right and wrong and realized that what he had just heard was anything but evil. After the Prophet (sa) finished offering his prayer, Tufayl followed him to his home and entered. He told the Prophet how the Koraysh warned against him and how he had plugged his ears tightly with cotton so that he would be unable to hear him, yet, he had heard his beautiful recitation. Tufayl asked the Prophet (sa) to tell him more about his message, whereupon the Prophet (sa) told him that the verses he recited were not his own composition, rather, they were from the Holy Koran sent to him from Allah via the Angel Gabriel. The Prophet (sa) to the great pleasure of Tufayl, proceeded to recite several more verses. As soon as the recitation had finished Tufayl could no longer restrain himself and converted to Islam, then returned home with the instruction to tell others in his tribe about Islam. Upon his return, Tufayl recited verses from the Koran and spoke about Islam to his family and tribesmen, but only his father and wife came into its fold. Tufayl was both very disappointed and angry that

so few had accepted the invitation so he returned to the Prophet (sa) in Mecca to ask him to curse those who refused to follow. The Prophet (sa) spoke kindly to Tufayl, but rather than cursing his tribe he supplicated to Allah for their guidance and told him to return home, continue preaching and to be patient with their shortcomings. Tufayl obeyed the Prophet (sa) and in the years to come many families in his tribe accepted Islam under his patient guidance.

CHAPTER 26 PRE-ISLAMIC CONDITIONS IN YATHRIB

Many generations before, no less than twenty-one Jewish tribes settled themselves in Yathrib and in the early days of their migration gained a reputation for their religious schools. However, over the passage of time the tribes dispersed and their numbers dwindled, leaving behind them just a fragment of people. Secularism was common although a religious minority still remained. The Jews were also well known for their business acumen through which they had amassed great wealth and in their hay-day they had once governed the City. After a devastating flood in Yemen, the Arab Yemeni tribe of Bani Kahtan left their homeland and settled in Yathrib. The Bani Kahtan divided themselves into two tribes named after two brothers -- Aws and Khazraj -- and over time their population grew and exceeded both that of the Jews and other Arabs. However, their was friction between the two tribes, disputes arose followed by blood feuds. All was not well within the Jewish community as corruption was rampant. There had been a sharp decline in morals most notably in one of their chieftains named Fityun. Fityun usurped his power in such a disgraceful manner that Arab brides-to-be were forced to sleep with him the night before their wedding whilst other Jewish leaders did nothing to prevent him from satisfying his lust, but that was soon to end. When the time came for the sister of Malik, Ajlan's son to be married, Malik felt ashamed of what was about to befall her. So, on the day before her wedding, his sister, dressed in her bridal gown, made her way to Fityun's house accompanied by her brother disguised as a female attendant. Before Fityun could take advantage of Malik's sister, Malik took him by surprise, killed him, then fled to the safety of the tribe of Ghassan in Syria whose chieftain was Abu Jabillah. When Abu Jabillah heard of the corrupt ways of the Jews he and his warriors were utterly outraged and set off with Malik back to Yathrib with the intent of putting matters right. Upon reaching Yathrib, Abu Jabillah honored the Arab chieftains with fine gifts and invited the Jewish leaders to join them in a feast. During the feast Abu Jabillah and his warriors overcame the Jewish leaders and all were slain. So it was from that time onward that the Jews lost the control of Yathrib and the tribes of Aws and Khazraj became the governors of Yathrib. Time passed and the Jews, in their weakened position, deemed it more prudent to ally themselves with the now stronger pagan Arab tribes of Aws and Khazraj. However, the Jews, considering themselves to be the chosen people of Allah, resented the fact that they were now beholden to pagan Arabs and all too often sharp words were exchanged. Many were the times they would taunt the Arabs with the news that a prophet was about to come and that Allah would slay them on account of their idolatry just as He had done to the people of Aad and Thamood. There were also other times when the religious Jews would speak to their allies about their religion; they told of their belief in One God and in the life after death. Their allies found the matter of being

raised from the dead difficult to believe so the Jews told them that when the prophet came he would confirm the truth of the matter. The idea of the coming of a prophet aroused both the curiosity and also the apprehension of the Arabs of Yathrib, so they asked where he would appear and were told in the direction of their ancestral homeland, Yemen, which also lies in the same direction of Mecca.

THE FEUD

For many years there had been a feud between a certain Awsite and Khazrajite tribe, and as time passed more tribes, including the Jews of Yathrib, were drawn into the feud. Three battles had already been waged with losses on both sides and now a fourth was imminent, so in an effort to strengthen their position, the tribe of Aws sent a delegation to Mecca to ask the Koraysh to side with them against the Khazraj. While they were waiting for the decision, the Prophet (sa) went to the delegation and asked if they would like to hear something better than that which they were seeking. The delegation asked what he had in mind whereupon the Prophet (sa) told them about Islam and of his mission, then recited some verses of the Koran. After he had finished the recitation, a young man named Iyas, Mu'adh's son, remembered the taunt of the Jews and got up and said, "By Allah, this is better than that which we were seeking!" Iyas' spontaneous outburst annoyed the leader of the delegation who picked up a handful of sand and threw it in his face saying, "That's enough! By my life, we came here seeking something other than this!" The young man became quiet and the Prophet (sa) left. Meanwhile, the Koraysh reached the decision that it was not in their best interest to take sides in the feud and so the delegation returned to Yathrib without their help and the battle of Bu'ath ensued. Not long after their return Iyas died, but as he lay on his deathbed those around him confirmed that his last words were spent in praise and exaltation of Allah, testifying to His Oneness. And so it was that, Iyas became the first person to die in Yathrib as a Muslim. It wasn't long after that traders and pilgrims returning from Mecca brought more news of the Prophet (sa) to Yathrib, the word spread quickly and soon the entire City was talking about him. The Jews listened intently to the reports and recognized the truth in the Prophet's preaching, but for the most part, they could not bring themselves to entertain the fact that he was the long awaited Prophet because he was not a Jew

CHAPTER 27 UNREST IN MECCA

THE FAILURE OF MECCANS TO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF THE PROPHET

In these early days of Islam, those who opposed the Prophet (sa) and his message were blinded by their own arrogant, useless idolatrous traditions and pride. Yet strange as it may seem, when it came to taking solemn oaths or when they wished people to take them seriously, the Arabs preferred to swear by Allah rather than their pagan gods For many years the pagan, materialistic society suffered on every count. They received no benefit for their dedication to the idols and corruption abounded in every form. Women were treated as

worthless human beings and seldom afford their rights, injustice, murder and thievery were, amongst other depravities, were rampant. Yet even as these sad, intolerable state of affairs persisted those who opposed the Prophet (sa) failed to recognize or admit that what the Prophet (sa), whom they had until recently, attested to having an honest and upright character, brought and practiced a much better, higher standard of life for all; a standard where justice and happiness prevailed. But more importantly they rejected the news that there was life after death where they would be held accountable for their disbelief in the Oneness of their Creator for which there is either eternal punishment or the unfailing eternal rewards of Paradise with its continuous peace and happiness. The fact of the matter was that they failed to recognize the true value of the Prophet (sa) both spiritually and materialistically.

ANGER AND RESTMENT

Anger and resentment towards the message th Prophet Muhammad (sa) brought continued to intensify in Mecca as the number of his followers began to increase. One day, inside the precincts of Ka'ba at the Hijr Ishmael, a group of unbelievers gathered and were indulging in slanderous remarks about the Prophet (sa) as he entered. However, he paid not attention and continued to make his way across to the Ka'ba where he kissed the Black Stone then proceeded to circumambulate the Ka'ba. The first time he passed by the Hijr Ishmael, the unbelievers shouted at him in a very disrespectful, degrading manner, the same occurred on his second and third round, but on the third round as they jeered and shouted their slanderous remarks he stopped and said: "O Koraysh, will you listen to me? Indeed, by Him who holds my soul in His Hand, I bring you slaughter." The unbelievers were silenced by this unexpected statement, and silence hovered like a heavy weight above the gathering. After a while the silence was broken by the one who had been the most venomous with his slander, and in a surprisingly gently tone he addressed Prophet Muhammad, (sa) saying, "Go on you way, father of Kasim, for by Allah you are not an ignorant fool." Soon the unbelievers began to regret their momentary weakness and vowed they would never allow a situation like that to be repeated.

ABU JAHL - THE FATHER OF IGNORANCE

Amr, Hisham's son, was an influential, power seeking young man of the Makhzum tribe. He was the grandson of Mughirah and nephew of Waleed, the now elderly chieftain of his tribe. Amr had amassed considerable wealth and was, to those who had not earned his anger, hospitable and had high hopes of becoming the next chief of the tribe so he erroneously viewed the Prophet (sa) as a possible threat to his future. Amr was also a man to be feared for he was known for his ruthlessness toward those who dared to cross his path, and that now included Prophet Muhammad, (sa) as well as his followers. Such was his hatred of the Prophet (sa) and his Message, and disregard for the next life, that he had been among those responsible for setting up the road-blocks into Mecca. When members of Amr's own tribe embraced Islam his outrage became so bitter that he persecuted them without mercy; it was because of this that Amr became known to the companions as "Abu Jahl" - "The Father of

Ignorance" and his supportive wife "The Mother of all Ignorance". One day, as the Prophet (sa) sat by himself outside the Ka'ba, Abu Jahl caught sight of him and ceased upon the opportunity to display his foul behavior. He went across to the Prophet (sa) and in an extremely abusive manner, insulted him in a very base manner, however, the Prophet (sa) was patient and did not allow himself to be provoked and went home. Arrogantly, Abu Jahl felt he had made a good impression on a party of Koraysh gathered near the Hijr Ishmael, and returned to them gloating in what he perceived to be triumph. Hamza, the young uncle of the Prophet, known for his gentle disposition despite the fact he had grown into a very strong man, had been away on a hunting expedition and had just returned to Mecca. As he entered the City Hamza was met by an elderly lady who had once served the now deceased, Abdullah, Judan's son, and told him of Abu Jahl's disgusting outburst. When Hamza learned of the abuse, raging anger swelled deep within his gentle being and he thundered towards the still gloating Abu Jahl and his gleeful comrades who were still gathered around the Hijr Ishmael. Upon seeing Abu Jahl, Hamza raised his hunting bow above Abu Jahl's head and struck him forcefully across his back saying, "How dare you. Would you insult him! Know that I am of his religion and swear what he swears. Strike me now if you can!" Those that had been seated rose up to join the others in support of Abu Jahl, but he chose not retaliate saying, "Let him alone, for by Allah, I reviled his brother's son in a crude manner." Such was Abu Jahl's hatred for the Prophet (sa) and his message, that he was to die in disbelief. However, when the news of the Prophet's birth reached him over forty years before, he had been so elated that he freed a female slave, and for this noble act, each Monday - the day on which the Prophet (sa) was born - Allah in His Mercy reduces his punishment in Hell. That same day Hamza went to the Prophet (sa) and embraced Islam. Now that Hamza had embraced Islam, the Koraysh were hesitant to continue with their vile behavior. They realized from now onwards they would have to answer to him for their actions, so they revised their tactics, for no one wanted to cross Hamza's path.

CHAPTER 28 AN ATTEMPT TO BRIBE

Utba, Rabia's son, belonged to the tribe of Shams, Abdu Shams was a brother of Hashim and it was he, who, together with notables of the Koraysh tribe now met to discuss how they might best deal with the Prophet (sa). During the course of the meeting Utba suggested that perhaps the Prophet (sa) might incline to accept certain gifts and privileges in exchange for his silence, but it they had searched in the depths of their hearts all would have known he was not like them and would never accept a bribe no matter how it was presented. However, all were of the opinion that every man had his price and so they placed high hopes on his suggestion saying that they would be prepared to offer him absolutely anything he might desire as recompense in exchange for his silence. They had just reached their agreement when a late comer joined the meeting and told the gathering that he had just seen the Prophet (sa) sitting alone beside the Ka'ba. They agreed that now was a good time to approach him with their proposal, and as Utba was related to him they chose him to be their representative. Utba made his way toward to the Prophet (sa) whereupon the Prophet (sa)

expressed his pleasure in seeing him, welcomed and invited him to sit down and talk. When Utba sat down the Prophet (sa) hoped he might have come to learn about Islam but Utba proceeded to say, "My nephew, you are one of us, from a noble tribe, a descendant of the finest ancestors. You have come to our tribes with an important matter that is dividing us. You have denounced our customs, insulted our gods and our religions. As for our ancestors, you say they were unbelievers, so listen to me because I have come to you with several proposals, perhaps you may accept one of them." The Prophet (sa) was very saddened but listened out of politeness as he never turned anyone away as Utba proceeded to describe the bribes. "If it is money you want, we are prepared to combine our properties and make you the richest one among us. If it is honor that you wish, we will make you our chief with complete and absolute power. If it is leadership, we will make you our leader and if the Spirit you see comes to you and you cannot rid yourself of it, then we will find a physician to cure you." After Utba finished presenting his bribe, the Prophet (sa) received a new Revelation from Allah:

"In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful. Ha Meem. A sending down from the Merciful, the Most Merciful. A Book, the verses of which are distinguished, an Arabic Koran for a nation who know. It bears glad tidings and a warning, yet most of them turn away and do not listen. They say: 'Our hearts are veiled from that to which you call us, and in our ears there is heaviness. And between us and you is a veil. So work (as you will) and we are working.'" Koran 41:1-5

The compelling beauty of the Koranic recitation held Utba's attention in wonderment and as he listened further he heard of the creation of the heavens and the earth. Then he heard of the prophets sent to the arrogant people of Aad, and of the proud people of Thamood. He learned that all, but a few of their citizens refused to listen to the Message Allah had given to their prophets so they, with the exception of those who believed, were subjected to punishments of the severest kind in this world and then even greater in the Everlasting Life. The Prophet (sa) continued his recitation with verses that drew attention to the multiple signs surrounding us and concluded with:

"Among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. But do not prostrate yourselves before the sun or the moon rather prostrate before Allah, who created them both, if it is He whom you worship." Koran 41:37

As soon as the Prophet (sa) finished the recitation, he prostrated his head upon the ground in exaltation and thanksgiving. Then arose saying, "O (Utba) father of Waleed, you have heard what you have heard, it is now up to you to decided." The sun had started to set and Utba's companions had waited patiently for his return. No doubt their hopes were high as he had been with the Prophet (sa) for a considerable length of time. However, when he returned they were struck by the changed expression upon his face and asked what had happened. Utba told them that he had heard a recitation that was uniquely beautiful yet it was neither poetry, nor was it the words of a soothsayer, nor yet sorcery. He advised his companions to do as he intended, which was, not to come between the Prophet (sa) and his affair. Then he swore by

Allah that the words he had just heard would be received by many as great tidings. Utba thought it more prudent that his blood should not be on their hands and commented if other Arabs were to kill him, then the responsibility would rest upon them, however, if his nephew were to become successful, he would govern them and his power would also be their power, and they would benefit. Utba's companions mocked him harshly and told him that he had been bewitched, but all Utba said was, "I have given you my opinion, do whatever you please." The Koraysh were angered by his advice so they decided to speak to the Prophet (sa) themselves so that no blame for their future actions could be attached to them and so they sent for him. The Prophet (sa) ever hopeful of guiding his tribe to Allah, went to them in haste. Soon he realized they had not called for him because their hearts had turned to Allah, rather the opposite was the case. The Koraysh rebuked him saying that never before had an Arab treated them in such a manner, reviling their gods, their customs and traditions. Once again, an effort to silence him was made as they endorsed the offer made earlier by Utba. As soon as the Koraysh finished offering their bribe, the Prophet (sa) turned to them in his usual gentle manner saying, "I am neither possessed, nor do I seek honor among you, nor the leadership. Allah has sent me as a Messenger to you and has sent down to me a Book with the command that I should give you good tidings but also a warning. I convey to you the Message of my Lord and counsel you. If you accept what I have brought you, you will receive blessings in this world and in the Everlasting life, but if you reject what I have brought, then, I will wait patiently for Allah to judge between us." The Koraysh, deeply disappointed by the Prophet's reply told him to leave. But before he left, they contemptuously told him that if he was really the Messenger of Allah he would have to prove it to them with something that would make their life easier. Their first demand was that he should ask Allah to remove the mountains that surround Mecca and to level the land so that rivers would flow through it just as they did in Syria and Iraq. Their demands continued; next they said that Ksay should be raised from the dead along with several of their ancestors, saying that they would ask Ksay if what the Prophet (sa) said was true or false, yet they knew he never lied. They continued saying that if he was able to bring about their demands, then, and only then, might they conceded he was who he said he was, and near to Allah. With respect, the Prophet (sa) replied that it was not on this account that he been sent. He told them that he had been sent to convey the Message of Allah and that they were free to either accept the Message or if they were adamant, reject it, and await the Judgement of Allah. On hearing his reply, the Koraysh changed their tactics saying that if he would not ask for these things, then, why not ask for something for himself. They told him to ask Allah to send an Angel to him who would confirm the truth of his preaching, and for gardens, and castles with treasures of gold and silver for himself. But the Prophet (sa) repeated his reply. The Koraysh continued to deride the Prophet (sa) asking if his Lord knew that he would be sitting amongst them and that they would ask him these questions. Their mockery continued as they asked why, if Allah had known these questions were going to be asked, hadn't He instructed him how to answer and tell him what He was going to do with them if they refused the Message he brought.

RAHMAN

The word "Rahman" means "the Merciful", and is one of the many attributes of Allah. The Koraysh noticed "Rahman" occurred at the beginning of each chapter of the Koran so in an effort to discredit the Revelation rumors were spread that the Prophet (sa) received tutorship in the art of poetry by a man from Yamamah called Rahman. When next they met with the Prophet (sa) they seized upon the opportunity to chide him still further saying, "We have heard your recitation is taught to you by a man from Yamamah called Rahman -- we will never believe in Rahman! We have made our position clear to you Muhammad, and swear by Allah, that we will neither leave you in peace nor desist in our treatment of you until we have either destroyed you or you have destroyed us!" The Prophet (sa) was about to leave when Abdullah, Ummaya's son from the tribe of Makhzum disrespectfully shouted, "O Muhammad, your people have offered you several propositions -- you have rejected all! First they asked for themselves, then they asked you to ask for yourself! They have even asked you to hasten some of the punishment you have spoken about upon them. By Allah, I will never believe you until I see you take a ladder, climb it, and reach the heavens, then bring four angels to bear witness that you are what you claim, and even then I doubt whether I will believe you!" Upon hearing this last remark the Prophet (sa) was deeply saddened because it had been made by Abdullah, the son of his aunt Atikah who had named her son after her beloved brother, the Prophet's father, which means "Worshiper of Allah". Allah sent the Prophet verses that would forever record the contempt and rejection of the Koraysh leaders:

"As such, We have sent you forth to a nation before whom others have passed away in order that you recite to them what We have revealed to you. Yet they disbelieve the Merciful (Rahman). Say: 'He is my Lord. There is not god except He. In Him I have put my trust, and to Him I turn.' If only a Koran whereby the mountains were set in motion, or the earth cleaved asunder, or the dead spoken to. No, but Allah is the affair altogether. Do those who believe know that had Allah willed He could have guided all people? As for those who disbelieve, because of what they do, disaster will not cease to afflict them, or it alights near their home until the promise of Allah comes. Allah will not break His promise." Koran 13:30-31

"They also say: 'How is it that this Messenger eats and walks about the markets? Why has no angel been sent down with him to warn us? Or, why has no treasure been thrown to him, or a garden for him to eat from?' And the harmdoers say: 'The man you follow is surely bewitched.'" Koran 25:7-8

"They say: 'We will not believe in you until you make a spring gush from the earth for us, or, until you own a garden of palms and vines and cause rivers to gush forth with abundant water in them; or, until you cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you have claimed, or, as a surety bring Allah with the angels in front; or, until you possess an ornate house of gold, or ascend into the heavens; and we will not believe in your ascension until you have brought down for us a book which we can read.' Say: 'Exaltations to my Lord! Am I anything except a human Messenger?'" Koran 17:90-93

ABU JAHL AND THE STONE

Abu Jahl continued to deride the Prophet (sa) after he had left and took an oath saying, "Tomorrow, I will lie in wait for him with a heavy stone, and when he prostrates I will split his skull with it. Betray me or defend me -- let the children of Abdu Manaf do what they like after that!" The next morning, the Prophet (sa) arose before dawn and made his customary way to offer his prayer near the Black Stone in the wall of Ka'ba. The Koraysh had already gathered and Abu Jahl, carrying a very heavy stone staggered as he approached the Prophet (sa) who was now humbly absorbed in his prayer, with the intent of fulfilling his oath. Before Abu Jahl was able to get close enough to the Prophet (sa) he turned back in deathly fright. His hand had started to wither on the stone whereupon he dropped it and ran as fast as he could. The Koraysh rushed towards him and asked what had come over him whereupon he told them he had seen a terrifying camel, with a tremendously large head, enormous shoulders and a fearsome set of teeth that looked as if it was about to devour him if he continued. Later on, the Prophet (sa) told his companions that the camel was none other than Gabriel, and if Abu Jahl had persisted he would indeed have seized him.

THE CONTEMPT OF ABU JAHL

Even though Abu Jahl had witnessed and given, first hand, many signs he still persisted in his egotistical obsession. He now bragged before the Koraysh that he would stamp on the back of the Prophet's neck the next time he saw him praying. When the Prophet (sa) arrived at the Ka'ba to pray the Koraysh drew Abu Jahl's attention to the opportunity. However, as before when Abu Jahl approached the Prophet (sa) with his evil intent, he ran away in fright, trying to protect himself with his hands. His fellow tribesmen asked what had happened whereupon he admitted, "As I came near to him, I looked down and saw a ditch full of fire and I almost fell into it. I saw a terrifying sight and heard enough fluttering of wings that would fill the earth!" Later, when Abu Jahl's words were reported to him the Prophet (sa) told his companions that the fluttering of wings where those of the angels and that if he had come any nearer to him they would have torn him limb from limb. Soon after the following verse was sent down: "Indeed, surely the human is very insolent." Koran 96:6

CHAPTER 29 NADAR, THE SON OF AL HARTIH

The Koraysh admitted the situation was now beyond their ability to remedy and although Nadar, Harith's son, whose grandfather had been the illustrious Ksay, had become notorious for his slander of the Prophet (sa) he reminded the Koraysh that the Prophet (sa) had grown up amongst them as a likable person known for his excellent standing in the society. Nadar now warned the Koraysh to be careful of their accusations for he was sure that they too knew that he was neither a poet nor yet a sorcerer. He reminded them that they also knew the ways of a sorcerer and by no means could he be described as such. He continued to advise them saying that they should be careful of what they said as he felt a serious matter had befallen them which called for a change in their tactics, and so the slanderous remarks subsided for

the time being.

NADAR'S ATTEMPT TO COMPETE WITH THE PROPHET (sa)

Nadar was a trader and had traveled the caravan routes not only in Arabia but to distant countries. Whenever he reached his destination it was his habit to seek out the storytellers in the market place and listen to their tales. On one particular trip he heard a tale about the kings of Persia, which, over the passage of time had been embellished by one storyteller then the next, and so the tale made a great impression upon him. One day as the Prophet (sa) spoke to a group of people he told them stories the like of which they had never heard before, of bygone generations and the consequences that befell them on account of their refusal to listen to their prophet. Nadar and Utba were among the gathering and no sooner had the Prophet (sa) finished his narration, Nadar jumped up and told them that he could tell them better stories than these then began to tell his captive audience about the kings of Persia, Rustum and Isbandiyar. After he finished the story he asked, "Who then is better at story telling, Muhammad or I?" Someone in the gathering suggested that Nadar and Utba visit the rabbis in Yathrib and ask them about the stories the Prophet had just told them. It was a challenge, and so Nadar and Utba decided to journey to Yathrib to confront the rabbis.

THE THREE QUESTIONS

When they arrived in Yathrib they asked where they might find the rabbis and upon being taken to them said, "You are the people of the Torah, we have come to you to ask how we should deal with one of our tribesmen," and proceeded to describe the Prophet (sa) and speak of his teachings. The rabbis remained silent until they had finished then one spoke saying, "You should ask him these three questions, if he answers you correctly then he is a prophet, however, if he is unable, then he is not, and from this you can form your own opinion." The rabbis asked their visitors to question the Prophet (sa) about the young men that disappeared from their people in ancient days, and then to question him about the great traveler who journeyed to the east and to the west. The final question they were to ask was about the Spirit.

THE PROPHET (sa) IS QUESTIONED

Nadar and Utba returned to Mecca and announced to their fellow tribesmen that the rabbis of Yathrib had given them three questions that would determine whether or not Muhammad was indeed the Prophet of Allah. When they reached the Prophet (sa) he listened to the questions in silence and told them he would give them a reply the next day, for he never spoke on religious matters without receiving its knowledge via the Angel Gabriel. However, when told them he would give them a reply the following day he forgot to say "Insha-Allah" which means - "Allah willing." The next day came and passed, however, Gabriel did not visited him with the answers which no doubt pleased the unbelievers.

ANGEL GABRIEL BRINGS THE ANSWERS

Several days elapsed and the Prophet (sa) patiently awaited the answers to the questions as rumors began to abound in every sector. Then, on the fifteenth day, Angel Gabriel came to him and he asked why he had not come before. Gabriel responded with a new verse from the Koran that said:

"(Gabriel said:) 'We do not descend except at the command of your Lord. To Him belongs all that is before us and all that is behind us, and all that lies between, Your Lord does not forget.'" Koran 19:64

THE STORY OF THE BELIEVING YOUNG MEN IN THE CAVE

In reply to the question about the young men in the cave Gabriel recited to the Prophet (sa) verses detailing their circumstances so later on when Nadar, Utba and their companions came to him he was able to recite the story to them. The verses told of some young men who lived in a city of idolaters. The young men, however, were not idolaters and told their fellow tribesmen:

"Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We call on no other god except Him; (for if we did), we would have spoken outrageously (in disbelief)." Koran 18:14

Then the young men challenged the idolaters to bring them some proof of their authority to worship more than One God asking:

"Who does greater evil than he who forges a lie against Allah?" Koran, 18:15

The idolaters turned against the young men and it was then that Allah put into their hearts the notion to seek refuge in a cave where they would be safe from the idolaters. Taking their dog along with them, the young men set off for the cave and upon reaching it Allah caused them to fall into a deep sleep.

"You might have seen the rising sun incline towards the right of their Cave, and, as it set go past them on the left, while they stayed within an open space in the Cave. That was one of the signs of Allah .... You might have thought them awake, though they were sleeping. We turned them about to the right and to the left, while their dog stretched its paws at the entrance. Had you seen them you would surely have become filled with terror and turned your back on them in flight. As such We revived them so that they might question one another. 'How long have you stayed here?' asked one of them. 'We have been here a day, or part of it,' they replied. They said: 'Your Lord knows best how long we have stayed here. Let one of you go to the city with this silver (coin) and let him search for one who has the purest food and

bring provision from it. Let him be courteous, but let no one sense it is you. For, if they appear in front of you, they will stone you to death or restore you to their religion. Then you will never prosper.' And so We made them (the unbelievers) stumble upon them, so that they might know that the promise of Allah is true and that there is no doubt about the Hour. They argued among themselves over the affair, then (the unbelievers) said: 'Build a building over them (their remains). Their Lord knows best who they were.' But those who prevailed over the matter said: 'We will build around them a Mosque.'" Koran 18:17-22

Regarding their number, the Revelation warned there was a difference of opinion among those who had heard the story and that:

"Some will say: 'They were three; their dog was the fourth.' Others, guessing at the Unseen, will say: 'They were five and their dog was the sixth.' And yet others: 'Seven, their dog was the eighth,' Say: 'My Lord knows best their number. Except for a few none know their number.' Therefore, do not dispute with them except in outward disputation, and do not ask any of them concerning them." Koran 18:22

THE STORY OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT (THUL-KARNAIN)

The answer to the second question concerning the great traveler, Alexander, was sent down to the Prophet (sa) in the following verses:

"They will ask you about Thul-Karnain (Alexander). Say: 'I will recite to you something of this story. We established him in the land and gave him means to all things. He journeyed on a way until when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring, and nearby he found a nation. 'Thul-Karnain,' We said, 'you must either punish them or show them kindness.' He replied: 'The evil-doer we shall punish. Then he shall return to his Lord and He will punish him with a stern punishment. As for he who believes and does good works he shall receive a fine reward in recompense and we shall bestow on them a rich reward and shall speak to him with a mild command.' Then he followed the road until he reached the rising of the sun, he found it rising upon a nation for whom We provided no veil against it to shade them. So, We encompassed in knowledge what was with him. Then he followed the road, when he reached between the two barriers he found on one side of them, a nation who could barely understand speech. 'Thul-Karnain,' they said, 'Look, Gog and Magog are corrupting the earth. Build us a barrier between us and them, and we will pay you tribute.' He replied: 'That which my Lord has given me is better, therefore help me with all your power, and I will build a barrier between you and them. Bring me ingots of iron.' After he had leveled between the two cliffs, he said: 'Blow.' And when he made it a fire, he said: 'Bring me molten copper so that I may pour over it.' Thereafter they could neither scale it, nor could they pierce it. He said: 'This is a mercy from my Lord. But when my Lord's promise is come, He will make it dust. The promise of my Lord is true.' On that day, We will let them surge on one another, and the Horn shall be blown, and We will gather them all together. On that Day We shall present Gehenna

to the unbelievers whose eyes were blinded to My remembrance and they were not able to hear." Koran 18:83-101

CONCERNING THE SPIRIT

Concerning the answer relating to the Spirit it was revealed:

"They question you about the spirit. Say: 'The spirit is from the command of my Lord. Except for a little knowledge all of you have been given nothing.'" Koran 17:85

The Revelation also bore the reminder:

"'Do not say of anything: 'I will do it tomorrow unless (you add) if Allah wills.' And remember your Lord when you forget and say: 'It may be that my Lord will guide me to something nearer to rectitude than this.'" Koran 18:23-24

The Prophet's life was full of guidance and examples. There was once an occasion later on in his prophethood where he offered three units of prayer when there should have been four. Had he not made this omission we would never have known how to correct our errors when we do the same. His omission to say "InshaAllah" was also another exemplary reminder to us through which we are guided.

NADAR AND UTBA RETURN WITH THE ANSWERS TO THE RABBIS

No one in Mecca had ever heard the story of the young men in the cave and the new Revelation attracted more people to Islam. As for the rabbis of Yathrib, they anxiously awaited for the news to arrive, and when it did, they acknowledged the truthfulness of the answers, however, they still wished to question the Prophet (sa) further upon the matter of the spirit. Even though the questions Nadar and Utba had challenged the Prophet (sa) with had been answered and acknowledged to be correct, their hearts remained hardened. Later, after his migration to Yathrib, the Prophet (sa) was questioned again by the rabbis concerning the spirit. They asked: "Who, 'Little indeed is the knowledge all of you have been given" referred too -- was it to them?" Prophet Muhammad (sa), told them that it referred to them, whereupon the rabbis objected saying that they had been given its knowledge in the Torah. The Prophet (sa) replied that indeed they had been given sufficient knowledge to satisfy their needs, if only they would practice it, but in comparison with the Knowledge of Allah, their knowledge was indeed little. It was during this discourse that the Prophet (sa) received another Revelation that informed:

"till Gog and Magog are let loose and slide down out of every slope." Koran 21:96

THE TIME OF GOG AND MAGOG

Later in his prophethood, the Prophet (sa) told his companions that near the end of the world, Gog, Magog and their followers would advance upon the Lake of Tabariah in Palestine. They will consume all of its water and it is then that Prophet Jesus - who will have descended from the heavens - together with his companions be besieged and suffer dreadfully from starvation. He continued to tell that when the siege reaches its height, Prophet Jesus and his companions will supplicate to Allah who will create in the back of the necks of Gog and Magog and their followers, worms, that will cause their death the very next morning. Then, Allah will send a flock of birds with necks as large as those of camels to carry away their foul smelling corpses. Prophet Muhammad (sa), conveyed good news to his companions that after this trial, Allah will send down rain from the heavens which will cleanse the earth and the earth will provide an abundance of fruit for everyone to enjoy. Then, the Prophet (sa) told his companions that it is while the Muslims are enjoying such blessings that Allah will send a sweet, gentle breeze to take away the soul of each and every one of them, thereby leaving only those who disbelieve behind on the earth. The Prophet (sa) concluded his prophecy by telling his companions that after the death of the believers, only the most vile people will remain on the earth who will copulate in public just like donkeys for all to see and that it will be during this time that the final hour will commence.

CHAPTER 30 PERSECUTION

Meanwhile, the Koraysh chieftains continued in varying degrees in their relentless hostility toward the Muslims. If a convert happened to be among the hierarchy of a tribe, Abu Jahl would reprimand him then ridicule the convert before his fellow tribesmen so that he lost their respect. Traders also suffered. When Abu Jahl discovered a trader had converted he gave orders that no one should deal with him anymore. As a result, the convert trader was unable to sell his wares and his circumstances were soon reduced to that of an impoverished person. The freemen who suffered most were poor converts, who, in the eyes of Abu Jahl, were the least important on the social scale. When one of them converted he would beat them without mercy and urge others to follow his example. As for convert slaves belonging to the unbelieving Koraysh, they received the worst and harshest punishment, for their standing was by far the weakest. Punishment such as brutal beatings followed by depravation of food and water were common, but perhaps the most severe punishment was that of being pinned down upon the scorching hot sands of Mecca and leaving the slave to endure the blistering heat of the sun without the relief of even a sip of water. Some of the physically weaker converts were unable to endure their prolonged punishment and forced to recant. However, their recantations were not from their heart, but just noises made by their tongues. Those who remained undetected would offer their prayers in secret, but there were many who did not have the privilege of privacy and their grief at not being able to offer their prayers was considerable.

BILAL, THE SON OF RIBAH

Amongst those that suffered the torture of the burning sands was Bilal, Hamamma and Ribah's son, who had never known what it was like to be a freeman as they had been born into slavery. Bilal was a slave of African descent and owned by the children of Jumah. When news of Bilal's conversion came to the attention of the children of Jumah, Ummaya, Khalaf's son, subjected him to the most severe kinds of punishment. The harshest torture Ummaya devised was to take him out into the desert during the hottest part of the day, throw him down upon his back so that it lay flat upon the already scorching sand, then place heavy rocks on top of Bilal's chest that prevented him from moving. With a voice full of hatred he would yell at him, "You will stay here until you either die or renounce Muhammad and worship Al-Lat and Al Uzza!" The strength of Bilal's faith was truly great, he never gave into the demands of Ummaya, and as he suffered in the unbearable heat, his weak, parched, strained voice would be heard faintly saying, "One, One!"

ABU BAKR FREES BILAL

Abu Bakr had already bought and freed six believing slaves when one day he came across Bilal whilst he was being tortured yet again. Shocked, and greatly distressed at seeing him in such an appalling condition, he went straight to Ummaya demanding, "Have you no fear of Allah that you treat this poor man in such a way -- how long do you intend continuing like this!" With a sneer, Ummaya replied, "It is you who have corrupted him -- save him from it!" Without hesitation Abu Bakr made him an offer. Bilal was no longer of any use to Ummaya, so the offer was accepted and Abu Bakr took Bilal home with him where he was cared for, nursed back to health and given his freedom.

THE FAMILY OF YASIR

Yasir had migrated to Mecca from Yemen, and there he met and married a slave-girl by the name of Sumayya. From their union was born a son whom they named Ammar. Ammar had been among the early converts to Islam and succeeded to bring his parents into its fold. All three were subjected to the same kind of torture as Bilal, but Yasir and Sumayya were to become martyrs. Sumayya's martyrdom finally came when Abu Jahl brutally thrust his lance into her and killed her.

KHABBAB, THE SLAVE OF UMM AMMAR

Khabbab was the slave of Umm Ammar and when he converted the Koraysh took to subjecting him to many forms of torture. On one such occasion they lit a fire, then spread its burning coals over the ground and forced him to lie down upon his back. To add to this, one of his torturers placed his foot firmly upon Khabbab's chest so that he could not move until the coals had burned themselves to ashes, however, Khabbab survived. In the years that followed Khabbab spoke to Omar about his torture and showed him his dreadfully scared back which was now white and pitted like that of a leper.

LUBAINA AND ZINNIRA, NADIA AND UMM UMAIS

Lubaina was the slave of Omar. Before Omar's conversion his harsh treatment of his convert slaves was well known. Omar was extremely strong, and when he discovered that Lubaina had converted he beat her until he was exhausted and then said, "I have not stopped out of pity, but because I am tired!" Lubaina held on strongly to her belief and said after her severe beating, "If this does not persuade you, Allah shall revenge me!" Zinnira was yet another slave owned by Omar. One day when Abu Jahl was visiting Omar he took it upon himself to beat her. Zinnira was beaten so harshly that she lost her eyesight. Nadia and Umm Umais were yet two more slaves who were among those tortured but refused to recant. When it came to freeing believing slaves, Abu Bakr did not think twice to pay the handsome sum demanded by their torturers to secure their release and the ladies just mentioned were among those blessed by his compassionate generosity.

THE REQUEST OF SOME OF THE COMPANIONS

Khabbab, Al Aratt's son, and some of the companions went to visit Prophet Muhammad (sa), to complain against their increased persecution and ask him to supplicate for victory over their aggressors. The Prophet (sa) listened with heartfelt sympathy and them with the story of a man, who, centuries before, had been taken captive by his enemy and told to renounce his belief. The man refused to give up his belief and so he was flung into a pit and left there. Later, after his captors thought his spirit would have weakened, he was dragged up out of the pit and told to recant, but still the man refused whereupon his flesh was torn from his bones by rakes, but he would not give up his belief. Finally, a saw was sent for and placed on top of his head and he was martyred as he was sawn in half. There was absolutely nothing that would tear him away from his faith. The Prophet (sa) consoled his companions saying, "Allah will surely bring this matter to an end, when a rider will be able to leave Sanna for Hadramet fearing nothing except Allah and the danger of a wolf attacking his sheep."

CHAPTER 31 THE EAVESDROPPERS

Abu Jahl, Al Akhnas son of Sharik's and Abu Sufyan were curious to learn why so many people were attracted to the Prophet (sa) so they decided to spy upon one of his gatherings. One night after the believers had gathered in the Prophet's house, they met together and then hid among the shadows so as not to be detected and waited for him to begin. The Prophet (sa) and his followers spent the night in prayer and also listened to the Prophet’s captivating recitation of the Koran. After its recitation, the Prophet (sa) much to the delight of his followers, lovingly expanded upon its meaning and stories from the knowledge he had been given by Gabriel. He never spoke on religious matters without having first been given knowledge from Gabriel, who was entrusted by Allah to deliver the Koran and its explanation. The hours slipped by and it was only just before dawn that the three returned home in fear

that if they stayed any longer someone might see them and then misinterpret their reason for presence. As they made their way home they warned each other that they must never do such a thing again. However, they were to return yet again on the second, and third night then leave as they had done before dawn, but as they parted company on the third night each took a binding oath never, ever, to return again. Later on that day Al Akhnas, with stick in hand, went to the home of Abu Sufyan to ask his opinion of the past three nights. Abu Sufyan told him that he had heard things he knew and already knew what was meant by them, and that he had also heard things he had not heard before and had not known their meaning. Al Akhnas concurred with Abu Sufyan and then went to Abu Jahl's home to ask his opinion. Al Akhnas found that Abu Jahl's position had not soften in the slightest, in fact he understood that Abu Jahl now saw the Prophet (sa) as an even greater threat and had become more opposed than ever. Abu Jahl reminded his visitor that he and his tribesmen competed with the Prophet (sa) and his followers for honor saying, "They have fed the poor, so have we; they have been generous, so have we, we are like two horses running neck-to-neck in a race. But, they say we have a Prophet to whom a Revelation is sent down from heaven -- when will we ever attain anything like that!" It was now more evident than ever that Abu Jahl feared he would loose his chance to be the chieftain of this very powerful tribe when his uncle died. Although, if he had put his pride to one side and listened without bias he would have realized his fear was completely unfounded as the Prophet (sa) was honorable and respectful, and never took away the authority of tribal chieftains or claimed such rank for himself. Now, in a fit of arrogant rage, Abu Jahl swore never to believe in the message the Prophet (sa) brought, nor would he ever again consider him to be truthful. The unbelievers persisted in their mockery of the Prophet (sa) saying, "There is a veil over our hearts, we do not understand what you say. There is also a heaviness in our ears so we are unable to hear you, and a curtain that divides us from you. You follow your path and we will follow ours. We do not understand any thing you say!" It was then that Allah sent down the verses:

"When you recite the Koran, We place between you and those who do not believe in the Everlasting Life an obstructing barrier. We lay veils upon their hearts and heaviness in their ears, lest they understand it. When you (Prophet Muhammad) mention your Lord alone in the Koran, they turn their backs in aversion. When they listen to you, We know very well how they listen. When they conspire, when the evildoers declare: 'You are only following a man who is bewitched.' See what they compare you to. They have surely gone astray and cannot find the Path. 'What!' they say, 'When we are (turned to) bones and broken bits, shall we be raised again in a new creation?' Say: 'Let you be stones or iron, or any other creation yet more monstrous in your minds.' They will ask: 'Who will restore us?' Say: 'He who originated you at first.' They will shake their heads and ask: 'When will this be?' Say: 'Maybe it is near, on that Day, He will summon you, and you shall answer Him with praise and you shall think you have stayed but for a little.'" Koran 17:45-52

CHAPTER 32 WALEED, CHIEF OF THE MAKHZUM

The status of Waleed, the elderly chieftain of the Makhzum, and uncle of Abu Jahl, within the Koraysh tribes was that of great standing and influence to the extent that one might say he was virtually the unofficial leader of all the Koraysh tribes. Prophet Muhammad (sa), was ever hopeful that the Message he brought would touch the hearts of tribal leaders, which would not only turn them into believers and the rest of their tribes, but make for strong allies and bring about the cessation of the relentless persecution of his companions. His uncle, Abu Talib, supported him but had not embraced Islam, which was a source of deep regret to the Prophet (sa), so now he sought the opportunity to approach Waleed. The opportunity was soon to present itself when one day they unexpectedly met together. Waleed did not brush the Prophet (sa) away and soon the two became engrossed in their discussion. During the course of their conversation, the Prophet (sa) was overheard by a blind passerby, who had recently converted to Islam. The blind man interrupted the conversation at an inopportune moment and asked the Prophet (sa) to recite to him some verses whereupon Waleed frowned and turned away. The conversation ended shortly after the interruption and Waleed left without being persuaded. Later, Waleed was heard to arrogantly exclaim to his fellow tribesmen, "Are Revelations sent to Muhammad and not to me! I am the most important among the Koraysh, and I am their lord! Why are they not sent to Abu Masoud, the lord of Thakif or myself -- we are the two great men of the two great cities!" The cities referred to were those of Mecca and Ta'if. Not long after the Prophet (sa) had spoken with Waleed he received a new, short chapter that refers, in part, to the blind man and Waleed:

"He frowned and turned away when the blind man came to him. And what could let you know? Perhaps he (comes to hear you) to be purified. (He might) remember, and the Reminder might profit him. As for he who is sufficed, you attended to him, although it is not for your to be concerned if he remained unpurified. And to him who came to you eagerly and fearfully, of him you were unmindful. No indeed, this is a Reminder; and whosoever wills shall remember it." Koran 80:1 - 12

CHAPTER 33 THE SPLITTING OF THE MOON

It was the night of the full moon and as it rose over Mount Hira its silvery light lit the City of Mecca below. Prophet Muhammad (sa), happened to be out walking with Ali and some of his companions when a group of unbelievers passed by. As might be expected, the unbelievers started hurling their usual mockery, then, one of them issued a challenge to the Prophet (sa) saying, "If you really are the Messenger of Allah, then split the moon into half!" The Prophet (sa) supplicated and to the absolute amazement of the unbelievers, Allah, the Most Able, caused the moon to split and draw away from its other half so that one half shone on one side of Mount Hira and the other below. The small crowd looked on in wonderment, then the Prophet (sa) turned to the unbelievers and his customary, innate, gentle manner asked them to bear witness, for his only desire was to bring them to Allah and save them from the Fire. Some converted immediately, whilst others were not ready to commit themselves, but those whose hearts were hardened refused to believe claiming that the miracle was nothing other

than magic and persisted, even after others from remote areas were questioned and bore witness that they too had seen the division of the moon, that the Prophet (sa) had cast a spell over their eyes. Allah refers to this miraculous event and the lies of the unbelievers saying:

"The Hour is drawing near, and the moon is split (in two). Yet if they see a sign (the unbelievers) turn their backs and say: 'This is but a continuation of sorcery!' They have belied, and follow their own fancies. But every issue will be settled!" Koran 54:1-4

CHAPTER 34 IDOLATORY THROUGH LACK OF DIVINE GUIDANCE - THE CONVERSION OF OMAR, SON OF KHATTAB

Although Omar disliked the Prophet (sa) and his companions, his reasons were different from those of his uncle Abu Jahl. Omar came from a family steeped in conservatism and tradition, and as such taught to respect, but not question through lack of Divine Guidance, the age-old custom of reverence for the idols and Ka'ba. The very idea of even challenging the validity of worshipping its idols was to Omar something that was simply not open for discussion. Traditions and heritage went hand in hand, and were to him, something to be preserved at all costs, although there was nothing to support the worship of the idols. As for the Ka'ba itself, only fragments of its real reason for reverence remained. To Omar, and most of the people of Mecca, he was content with the age-old illogical excuse that his fathers and ancestors had worshipped them and what had been good enough for them, was still good enough for his generation. When Omar heard the Prophet (sa) calling upon people to renounce the idols and worship just One God, Allah, it was more than he could bear. To Omar's way of thinking, the Prophet (sa) and his Message had become a threat to the very fabric of his society's heritage, unity and ultimately its existence so he had come to the conclusion that the only way to stop the escalation would be the elimination of the Prophet (sa).

THE ATTEMPT OF OMAR AND ABU JAHM TO KILL THE PROPHET (sa)

Omar and Abu Jahm, Hudhayfa's son were of a similar mind so they agreed that on a specified night to go to the Prophet's home and accomplish the matter. However, upon reaching his house they heard him reciting the words: "The Resurrection Verifier; and what is the Resurrection Verifier? What makes you to know what the Ressurection Verifier is? Thamood and Aad belied the Clatterer. Thamood, they were destroyed by the violent shout (of Gabriel), as for Aad, they were destroyed by a howling, violent wind that He subjected upon them for seven nights and eight days consecutively and you might have seen them struck down as if they were the stumps of palm tress that had fallen down. Can you see any remnant of them now?" Koran 69:1-8

When Abu Jahm heard these words he struck Omar's arm violently exclaiming, "Save yourself!" and they ran away in fright.

NU'AYM DIVERTS OMAR

The matter, however, still weighed heavily upon Omar's mind, he could bear it no longer. The matter had, in his opinion, to be resolved once and for all, so he fastened his sword to his belt and stormed out of the house. He had not gone far when Omar was met by a fellow tribesman by the name of Nu'aym, Abdullah's son. Nu'aym had embraced Islam, however, very few people knew of his conversion and without doubt Omar was completely unaware. Upon seeing the determined look upon Omar's face and then the sword fastened to his belt, Nu'aym suspected trouble and asked casually, so as not to arouse suspicion, where he was going. Omar replied, "I am going to kill Muhammad; he has divided us!" Nu'aym, trying to conceal his fear for the Prophet (sa) tried to dissuade Omar by telling him that even if he succeeded the children of Abdu Manaf would never rest until they had taken their revenge and killed him. Nu'aym was quick to realize that Omar was not to be put off by his advice so desperately, in an effort to buy time in which he could alert the Prophet (sa) and his companions, he said, "Omar, you should put things right in your own house first!" Omar was startled, and asked what he meant by such a statement. Nu'aym replied, "Your sister, Fatima and her husband Sa'id, they are followers of Muhammad and his religion." Without so much as a word, Omar stormed off to his sister's house. Nu'aym felt badly at having exposed Fatima and Sa'id to Omar's wrath, but he knew they would understand his intention as they, like every convert loved and would do anything to shield their beloved Prophet (sa) from the prospect of harm.

THE RECITATION OF KHABBAB

Now among the literate people of the tribe of Zuhra was a convert called Khabbab. Khabbab had a very sweet voice and had learned the recitation of the Koran. Fatima and Sa'id loved to both recite and listen to its recitation and so Khabbab had become a most welcome visitor to their home. On the day Omar discovered his sister and her husband had become Muslims, Khabbab happened to be visiting them. It was as they were sitting together reciting the new chapter "Ta Ha" which had recently been sent down, then written upon a piece of parchment, that Omar arrived at her house and made his presence known by calling out his sister's name in a thunderous voice. Khabbab was stricken with fear, for he was among those who were poor and of little standing, so he hid himself in Fatima's house hoping that Omar would not discover his presence, but before hiding, Fatima took the parchment from him and hid it under her gown. Omar burst into Fatima's house and demanded, "What was that mumbling I heard?" Fatima and Sa'id told him that he heard no mumbling. Angrily, Omar replied, "Indeed, I heard you and I have been told that you have both become followers of Muhammad!" Omar restrained himself no longer, and started beating his brother-in-law without mercy. Fatima tried to intervene but a blow intended for Sa'id struck her and she began to bleed profusely whereupon she cried out to her brother to do whatever he wanted, and told him that, yes, he was right, they had indeed become Muslims. When Omar realized what he had done to his sister he was overcome with remorse and his attitude changed. In a soften tone he asked, "Give me what I have just heard you reading from so that I might see what Muhammad has

brought." Fatima, fearful of her brother's intention, replied, "I am afraid to trust you with it" whereupon Omar laid down his sword and said, "Do not fear, by Allah, I will give it back to you." Fatima knew her brother to be a man of his word and hoped with all her heart he would embrace Islam and spoke to him gently saying, "O my brother, because of your idolatry you are unclean, and only the cleansed may touch it." Omar heeded his sister's words and went to wash himself. When Omar returned Fatima gave him the parchment and Allah, in His Mercy caused the light of faith to enter his heart and he began to read.

THE SUPPLICATION OF THE PROPHET (sa)

After Omar had finished reading, Khabbab came out from his hiding place and said, "Omar, I hope that through the prayer of our Prophet (sa) Allah has chosen you, because yesterday I heard him supplicate, 'O Allah, strengthen Islam with either Abdul Hakam, Hisham's son or with Omar, Khattab's son." These encompassing words of Khabbab touched Omar in such a way that he asked where he might find the Prophet (sa) so that he might go to him and embrace Islam. Khabbab no longer feared for the Prophet's safety under the hand of Omar and told him that he would find him together with his companions in the house of Akram, near the Hill of Safwa.

OMAR'S ARRIVAL AT THE HOUSE OF AKRAM

Omar fastened his sword and made ready to leave for the house of Akram. When he reached the house he knocked at the door and announced himself. Meanwhile, Nu'aym had been able to warn the Prophet (sa) and his companions of Omar's original intent, so they were taken by surprise when they heard the gentle tone of his voice. One of the companions got up and went to look through a small crack in the door and returned to the Prophet (sa) to confirm that it was indeed Omar and that he was wearing his sword. The Prophet (sa) was not afraid for he trusted Allah and knew He had answered his supplication, and gave permission to let Omar enter. However, Hamza told his companion to open the door saying, "If he comes with good intent, he will receive much good, but on the other hand, if his intentions are evil then he would kill him with his own sword."

OMAR EMBRACES ISLAM

As Omar entered, the Prophet (sa) caught hold of his belt by surprise and led him into the middle of the room then asked in his usual gentle manner, "What brings you here, son of Khattab." Meekly, Omar replied, "O Messenger of Allah (sa) I have come to you so that I may proclaim my belief in Allah and in His Messenger, and in that which He has sent down to you." In gratitude and humility, the Prophet (sa) exalted Allah saying "Allah is the Greatest!" Those present felt an overwhelming sense of relief and followed the Prophet’s example and exalted Allah as they realized Omar was no longer their enemy, but one of them, a Muslim.

ABU JAHL LEARNS OF OMAR'S CONVERSION

The next morning, Omar went to the house of Abu Jahl and knocked at his door. Abu Jahl was happy to see his favorite nephew and came out to welcome him asking what had brought him there. Omar told him that he had come to tell him that he believed in Allah and bore witness that Muhammad is His Messenger, and to the truth which is sent down to him. Abu Jahl's face blackened and as he cursed his nephew, slammed the door in his face.

THE KORAYSH LEARN OF OMAR'S CONVERSION

Omar had no intention of keeping his conversion secret, so he went to Jamil, Mamar Al Jumahi's son, the Koraysh gossip, knowing well he would spread the news quickest and told him of his conversion. Omar's assumption was correct, Jamil jumped up, and made straight for the Ka'ba with Omar following a few steps behind. At the door of Ka'ba, Jamil proclaimed loudly for all to hear, "Omar has apostatized!" Then Omar shouted! "He is a liar, I have become a Muslim and testify that there is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet and His Messenger! Several unbelievers, standing near Ka'ba witnessed Omar's proclamation and started to fight him. The fighting continued until the heat of the mid-day when Omar took a rest saying, "Do as you will, I swear by Allah that if you were three hundred men I would have fought it out on equal terms!" Just then, a Koraysh chieftain, robed in a Yemeni cloak intervened and asked what was going on. When he was told that Omar had embraced Islam, he turned to them and asked, "Why shouldn't a man choose a religion for himself -- what are you trying to do? Do you think that the children of Adiyy will surrender their companion to you? Let the man alone!" And so Omar was left in peace. Now that Omar had proclaimed his acceptance of Islam, the companions felt more secure to worship Allah at the Ka'ba, as the unbelievers feared a formidable encounter with Omar and Hamza.

CHAPTER 35 THE BOYCOTT

Now that Hamza and Omar had converted to Islam, the Koraysh viewed the Prophet (sa) in a different light. Their persecution had failed to halt the ever increasing number of their fellow tribesmen from following the him, so they decided to call for a meeting of all the Koraysh chieftains to devise an alternate plan which would cause the Muslims hardship in as many aspects of their lives as possible. No less than forty chieftains from the Koraysh with its branches gathered to discuss the matter. The plan which proved acceptable to the majority was, that from now onward they would boycott the tribes of the children of Hashim, and Muttalib with the exception of Abu Lahab who was their staunch ally. No longer would their children be permitted to marry members of these tribes and trade between them was now strictly forbidden.

THE WITHERED FINGERS

To ensure that none would be tempted to break the boycott, Mansoor, Ikrima's son, wrote down the pact details and fastened it onto a wall inside the Ka'ba as a reminder to anyone who might be tempted to break the pact, for some of the Koraysh tribes did not agree wholeheartedly to the harshness of the sanctions. When the Prophet (sa) heard of Mansoor's action, he supplicated to Allah against him, whereupon several of Mansoor's fingers withered away. In addition to this the Prophet (sa) prophesized to the Koraysh that the pact would be eaten by termites and only the Name of Allah would remain. As a matter of safety, the Prophet (sa) who was always concerned for the welfare of his companions, decided it would be better for the Muslims to live close to one another. With this in mind, it was decided that they would settle near the home of Abu Talib, who, although still a non-Muslim choose to remain allied to the Prophet (sa).

THE RELOCATION OF ABU LAHAB

Until that time, Abu Lahab, whose unwarranted, violent hatred of the Prophet (sa) and his Message was common knowledge, lived near Abu Talib. However, when the Prophet (sa) and Lady Khadijah arrived to live there Abu Lahab and his household packed their belongings and moved away. Now that the boycott was in place, Abu Jahl, obsessed in his hatred, occupied his time ensuring that it was strictly observed.

FLOUR FOR LADY KHADIJAH

Lady Khadijah had a nephew called Hakim who belonged to one of the tribes participating in the boycott. One day, Hakim, and his servant were seen by Abu Jahl taking a bag of flour into the predominately Muslim sector. Abu Jahl accused Hakim of breaking the boycott and a heated argument ensued in which Abu Jahl threatened to expose Hakim to the others. During the argument Abdul Bakhtari, from the tribe of Asad, overhead the two arguing and asked what all the fuss was about. When it was explained to him, he sided with Hakim arguing that he could see no harm in what Hakim was doing as he was just returning a bag of flour belonging to his aunt. Abdul Bakhtari told Abu Jahl that there was no need to make such a big issue of the matter and to let Hakim go on his way, Now that Abdul Bakhtari had taken sides in the argument, tension increased and a scuffle broke out. In self defense, Abdul Bakhtari picked up the jaw-bone of a camel and struck Abu Jahl with such forced upon his head that he fell concussed to the ground.

HISHAM, THE SON OF AMR

Among the tribes whose chieftains had signed the pact were tribesmen -- especially those closely related through marriage -- who felt compassion towards the Muslims. One such person was Hisham, Amr' son. When night fell, and no one was about, Hisham would often load his camel with food, clothing and gifts, lead it towards the Muslim houses then strike the camel on its rump so that it ran down into the streets of the boycotted area. The food and

gifts were immediately shared amongst the Muslims, and they were grateful for his courage and generosity. A little over two years had now passed, the boycott remained in force and the Prophet (sa) and his companions faced the severe hardship of poverty and deprivation with patience, knowing that Allah would bless them. Even Abu Bakr who had once been among the wealthiest of Meccans was now reduced to a poor man. With the shortage of food, times were difficult but the light of faith and the much loved companionship of their every caring Prophet (sa) made the hardship easier to endure.

THE SACRED MONTHS

It was only during the Sacred months that the Muslims felt safe enough to leave their homes to pray at their beloved Ka'ba. However, although they suffered no physical harm during these months, the unbelievers did not withhold their verbal abuse. Amongst those whose verbal abuse was the most offensive was Ummaya, Khalaf's son. Whenever he saw the Prophet (sa) he seized the opportunity to hurl slanderous, backbiting statements at him. It was during this time that Allah sent down verses that warned of the punishment of backbiters and slanderers:

"Woe to every backbiter, slanderer who amasses wealth and counts it, thinking his wealth will render him immortal! On the contrary! He shall be flung to the Crusher. What shall let you know what the Crusher is? (It is) the kindled Fire of Allah, which shall oversee the hearts, closed around them in extended columns." Koran Chapter 104

THE FATE OF SOME THAT MOCKED

There were five men who were the most vile in their mockery. From the tribe of Asad there was Al Aswad, Muttalib's son, who grandfather was Asad Abu Zama'a. From the tribe of Zuhra, it was Al Aswad, Abdu Yaghuth's son. From the Makhzum tribe the most notorious was Al Waleed, Mughira's son. From the tribe of Sahm, it was Al As, Wa'il's son, grandson of Hisham. Then, from the tribe of Khuzaha, Al Harith, Tulatila's son was certainly the most vile. Concerning those that mocked, Allah sent down the verses:

"Proclaim then, what you are commanded and turn away from the unbelievers. We suffice you against those who mock, and those who set other gods with Allah, indeed, they will soon know. Indeed, We know your chest is straitened by that they say." Koran 15:94-97

One day when the Prophet (sa) was near the Ka'ba, those foremost in mockery were circumambulating it when the Angel Gabriel came to the Prophet (sa) and stood beside him. Al Aswad, Muttalib's son was the first to pass by the Prophet (sa) and as he did Gabriel threw a green leaf at face that caused Al Aswad to become blind. Al Aswad Abdu Yaghuth's son was the next to pass, whereupon Gabriel pointed to his stomach that became so bloated that he died. Following these two came Al Waleed. Several years before Al Waleed had passed by a man repairing his arrows. Some of the arrows became tangled up in his long robe and caused

a minor wound that left him with a small scar. Gabriel now pointed at it, the wound reopened, festered and Al Waleed died. Next came Al As, whereupon Gabriel pointed to his instep. Later, on a journey to Ta'if, Al As stopped to rest under a thorny tree to which he tethered his mount. As he did he stepped upon a thorn; the wound became infected and shortly afterwards he died. Al Harith was the last to pass. Angel Gabriel pointed to his head which immediately filled with pus and thereafter he died.

THE CRUELTY OF ABY LAHAB AND HIS WIFE

Abu Lahab and his wife, Umm Jamil, reveled in the effort they took to try and demean or harm the Prophet (sa). Umm Jamil, took great pleasure in gathering sharp thorns then strewing them at night along the paths most frequented by the Prophet (sa) in hope of injuring him, however, Allah caused the thorns to be as soft sand and blessed him with such keen eye sight that he could see as well during the darkness of night as he could during the day. Such was their unwarranted hatred of Prophet Muhammad (sa) that Abu Lahab, ordered his sons to divorce Ladies Rukayyah and Umm Kulthum, the daughters of the Prophet (sa) before their marriages had been consummated, then pressed upon Lady Zaynab's father-in-law to do make his son do the same. However, Lady Zaynab's husband, Al As, loved her and refused saying he had no wish to marry another. It was during these times of hardship that Allah sent down a short chapter that spoke of the punishment in the Everlasting life of Abu Lahab and his wife.

"Perish the hands of Abi-Lahab, and perish he! His wealth will not suffice him neither what he has gained; he shall roast at a Flaming Fire, and his wife, laden with firewood shall have a rope of palm-fiber round her neck!" Koran Chapter 111

THE REACTION OF UMM JAMIL

When Umm Jamil heard the Revelation, the hatred she harbored towards the Prophet (sa) reached a new height. In a violent rage she fetched her stone pestle and headed straight to the Ka'ba where she expected to find the Prophet (sa). As she entered its confines she caught sight of Abu Bakr and went up to him demanding, "Where is your companion!" Abu Bakr was taken by surprise, he knew well to whom she referred, yet she had not seen the Prophet (sa) who was sitting close to him. Umm Jamil continued her ranting, "I have heard he has satirized me, by Allah, if I had found him here I would have destroyed his mouth with this pestle. Indeed, I am no lesser poet than he!" Then she recited a short, degrading rhyme she had written, then left. Abu Bakr turned to the Prophet (sa) and asked whether or not he thought she had seen him. The Prophet (sa) informed Abu Bakr that she had not because Allah in His Mercy to him had concealed his person from her sight. Then the Prophet (sa) commented upon her rhyme drawing his companion's attention to the use of the word "mudhammam" which she had chosen to use, meaning reprobate, which is the opposite to "Muhammad" which means praised. He also commented, "Isn't it surprising that the injuries the Koraysh try to inflict are deflected away from me? They curse and satirize Mudhammam, whereas I am

Muhammad."

KHABBAB, THE SWORD MAKER AND AL AS

Amongst the companions of the Prophet (sa) was a sword-smith by the name of Khabbab, Aratt's son. Now Al As, Wa'il's son asked Khabbab to sell him some of his swords, the price was agreed but he had no intention of paying him. Khabbab waited and waited then finally went to him and asked for his money. With contempt Al As asked, "Doesn't your companion, Muhammad, whose religion you follow, say that in Paradise there is as much gold, silver, clothes and servants that his people could ever wish for?" "Yes, indeed," replied Khabbab. "Then," said Al As, "give me until the Day of Repayment when I return to that House and I pay my debt to you there. By Allah, you and your companion will be no more influential with Allah than I, nor will you have a great share in it!" Not long after Al As had spoken these words, Allah sent down to the Prophet (sa):

"Have you see he who disbelieves Our verses and yet says:

'I shall surely be given wealth and children!' Has he gained knowledge of the Unseen? Or taken a covenant with the Merciful? On the contrary, We will write down what he says and prolong the length of his punishment.

We shall inherit that of which he speaks and he will come before Us alone." Koran 19:77-80.

THE CAMEL TRADER FROM IRASH

A camel trader from Irash had driven his camels to Mecca where he hoped to sell them for a fair price. When Abu Jahl saw the camels he decided to buy them and the price was agreed, however, he took the camels and then refused to pay for them. The trader was very distressed by Abu Jahl's unjust behavior and went to the Ka'ba where he found a group of Koraysh and told him of his plight saying, "Who will help me to receive what is rightfully mine from Abu Hakam, Hisham's son (Abu Jahl's given name). I am a traveler, a stranger, and he will not pay his debt!" The tribesmen paid no heed to his plight and out of contempt, the Koraysh directed the trader to the Prophet (sa), who was sitting near the Ka′ba. They knew he would never turn away anyone in distress and hoped the situation would provoke hostile encounter with Abu Jahl. In mockery they told the trader, "Go to him, he will help you receive your rights!" So the trader made his way to the Prophet (sa) to entreat his help. Respectfully, the Prophet (sa) invited him to sit down and listened to the trader′s complaint. It was of no consequence whether or not an injured party was a Muslim or not, the Prophet (sa) always advocated justice for all and it was clear that an injustice had been done to the trader and so they made their way to Abu Jahl's house and attend to the matter. When the Koraysh saw Prophet Muhammad (sa) and the trader leaving together, they sent one of their companions after them with the instruction to follow and report back upon the happenings. When the

Prophet (sa) and the trader reached Abu Jahl's house, the Prophet (sa) knocked at the door and Abu Jahl asked from behind closed doors who was there. The Prophet (sa) replied that it was he and asked him to come out. As Abu Jahl came out of his house it was noticeable how pale his face had become and that he was very agitated. The Prophet (sa) asked him to settle his debt with the trader whereupon Abu Jahl raised no objections and went inside to fetch the agreed sum of money. The money was given to the trader who thanked the Prophet (sa) and they parted company. The trader returned to the Koraysh saying, "May Allah reward him, I have received my rights on his account!" When the companion of the Koraysh returned he confirmed what happened. Just then, Abu Jahl joined them and they asked what had happened, adding they had neither expected nor had they ever seen him do anything like that before. Abu Jahl swore by Allah that when the Prophet (sa) knocked at the door he had become filled with terror, so he had opened it. As he did he saw, towering above his head, the same rogue camel with a massive head, sharp teeth and broad shoulders he had seen once before at the Ka′ba. He told them that there was no doubt in his mind that if he had refused to pay the trader the camel would have set upon him and devoured him.

CHAPTER 36 THE COMPANIONS MIGRATE TO ABYSINNIA

As the persecution and suffering of the Muslims, be they well connected or not, increased, the Prophet (sa) who was always concerned for their welfare and security approved the migration to Abyssinia of all those wishing to leave. The reputation for justice and tolerance of the Nazarene ruler of Abyssinia, the Negus, was well known, and so in secrecy, during the month of Rajab, twelve companions with their families, a total of eighty-three adults and children, set out for Abyssinia. Amongst the migrants were Lady Rukayyah, the Prophet's daughter who was married to Othman, Affan's son, Abu Hudhayfah, whose father Utba was one of the principal persecutors of the Prophet (sa). Abu Sabra, Ruhm's son a cousin of the Prophet (sa) through his aunt Bara. Abu Salama Al Makhzumi and his wife Umm Salama, who, upon the death of her husband was to marry the Prophet (sa). Othman, the son of Makhzum Humahi, a close companion of the Prophet (sa). Amir the son of Rabia and his wife Leila -- Amir had been one of the early converts. Zubair, Al Awwam's son cousin of the Prophet (sa) and his close companion who later married Asma, the daughter of Abu Bakr. Musab the son of Umair, grandson of Hashim. Abd Al Rahman, the son of Auf from the tribe of Zuhra, another relative and close companion of the Prophet (sa) who was informed by the Prophet (sa) that Paradise was assured for him. Abu Hatib, Amr's son, Suhail, Baida's son and Abdullah, Masoud's son, who was yet another of the close companions of the Prophet (sa). When the migrants reached the coast they found two half-empty ships bound for Abyssinia and the captains agreed to carry them for the sum of five dirhams per passenger. The language spoke in Abyssinia at that time was very much akin to Arabic and so it wasn't long until the companions settled down and made friends with their welcoming new neighbors.

THE KORAYSH LEARN OF THE MIGRATION

So subtle had been the migration of the companions that the Koraysh remained unaware of their departure until long after they had reached the safety of Abyssinia. When it suddenly dawned upon the Koraysh that they had not seen several Muslim families for some time they realized something was amiss and became greatly angered as they discovered that not only they, but other families, had migrated to Abyssinia without their knowledge. Although the Koraysh had made it very clear that the Muslims were unwelcome to practice their religion in Mecca they now wished they had contained them in the City because they began to fear they would become successful in converting others and so gain strength.

THE ATTEMPT TO BRING THE MIGRANTS BACK

In an attempt to regain control over the migrant Muslims, the Koraysh called for an urgent meeting to discuss what they should do to remedy the situation. The meeting was concluded when the decision was reached that they would send two of their trusted tribesmen, Abdullah, Abu Rabia's son and Amr, Al As' son, to the Negus bearing gifts of the finest leather, which they knew were highly prized by Abyssinians, with the request that the migrants be returned to Mecca. It was also agreed that Abdullah and Amr should approach the Negus' high ranking generals behind his back and bribe them individually with a fine hide in return for their support in securing their aim. Before Abdullah and Amr departed, Abu Talib, whose sons Jafar and Amr were among the migrants, sent a short poem he had composed to the Negus asking him to protect his sons. The poetic message was subtle, it asked the Negus if his sons remained under his protection, or if they had been delivered into the hands of mischief makers. He told of the happiness the refugees must be enjoying by being permitted to stay in his county. He closed the poem with tender words in praise of the Negus for his hospitality to both friend and stranger alike.

THE GENERALS

Upon reaching the Negus' palace, Abdullah and Amr first visited and succeeded to bribe the generals saying, "Some foolish people of ours have taken refuge in your country. They have abandoned their religion, yet they have not converted to yours because they have devised one of their own, the like of which is unknown to us and to you. Our noble leaders have sent us to ask the Negus to let them return with us and it is our desire that you advise him so that they might return." Abdullah and Amr were quick to add that they thought it preferable that the migrants should not be permitted to speak with the Negus. Like the Koraysh chieftains, Abdullah and Amr were afraid that if the Muslims were given the opportunity to speak to the Negus, he would listen kindly and incline to what they had to say. With this in mind they told the generals that they knew well their people's ways and faults and it was not only their desire that they should return home but those of their close relatives.

THE AUDIENCE

The Negus received his visitors courteously, and the envoys presented their gifts then asked for the return of their fellow tribesmen. As one might expect the generals were strongly supportive of the request and tried to persuade the Negus to agree. The Negus, being both wise and fair became outraged at the suggestion that these people who sought refuge in his country should be sent back without a hearing and replied, "No, by Allah, I will not surrender them! On no account will anyone, who, having sought my protection, settled in my country and chosen me rather than their own be betrayed. I will question them about the matter these two men allege, then, if they are as they say, I will send them back with their people. On the other hand, if what has been said is false, I will respect them and they will receive both my hospitality and protection."

THE NEGUS AND THE MIGRANTS

The Negus sent for the migrants to come to the palace and at the same time called upon his bishops to attend the meeting and asked them to bring their scriptures with them. When all were assembled, the Negus asked the companions several direct questions relating to their reasons for leaving their people. Among the questions were, why had they chosen not to adopt his religion, this was then followed by an inquiry about their belief. Jafar, Abu Talib's son, acted as spokesman for the Muslims. He told the Negus that before Islam they had been ignorant people, worshipping idols, committing the most regrettable things, and showing little or no mercy to those weaker than themselves. Then he told him about Prophet Muhammad (sa), who had been sent to them and detailed his lineage, and spoke of his reputation for being upright, truthful and trustworthy. Jafar continued to tell the Negus that the Prophet (sa) called them to the Oneness of Allah and to worship Him alone. He told them how he had said they must renounce their idols and the false concepts their fathers and ancestors had followed. Then, he told the Negus that the Prophet (sa) instructed them to speak truthfully, fulfill their promises, care for their relatives and neighbors. That they must neither kill, nor consume the wealth of orphans, nor should they falsely accuse good women. Jafar also explained how they had been taught to pray five times each day, to be charitable and to fast. Nearing the end of the audience, Jafar told the Negus that it was on account of these matters that their people had turned against and persecuted them in an effort to force them revert to their old religion. He also told the Negus that the reason for their migration to his country was because they knew they would be secure under his protection. The Negus was impressed by Jafar's honorable reply and asked if he was able to recite some of the Revelation to him, so Jafar recited verses from the Chapter Mary:

"And mention in the Book, Mary, how she withdrew from her people to an eastern place and she took a veil apart from them; We sent to her Our Spirit (Gabriel) in the resemblance of a perfect human. (And when she saw him) she said: 'I take refuge in the Merciful from you! If you are fearful.' 'I am the Messenger of your Lord,' he replied, 'and have come to give you a pure boy.' 'How shall I bear a son,' she answered, 'when I am not touched by a human and not unchaste?' ʽEven soʼ he replied, ʽas such your Lord has said: 'Easy it is for Me. And We shall make him a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us. It is a matter decreed.'" Koran 19:16-

21

When the Negus and his bishops heard these words they wept and declared that the religion the companions followed was from the same source as their own. Then the Negus swore an oath that he would never betray the migrants, then asked Abdullah and Amr to leave.

THE PLOT OF AMR AND ABDULLAH

Angrily, Amr and Abdullah left the palace and as they did Amr said, "Tomorrow, I will go to the Negus and tell him something I know will destroy their newly found prosperity and its roots! I will tell him that they believe Jesus, the son of Mary, is just the worshiper of Allah!" The following morning, Amr went to the Negus saying, "Your majesty, you must also be informed that they adhere to an enormous lie about Jesus, the son of Mary, send for them and ask what they say about him!" The Negus sent for the companions and asked what they believed about Jesus. Once again Jafar acted as their spokesman and told him, 'We say what has been sent down to our Prophet (sa), ‟Indeed, the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, is only a Messenger (and Prophet) of Allah. And His Word (Be) which He gave to Mary, and a (created) spirit by Him." Koran, Ch.19:171 The Negus bent down, picked up a stick and said, "Jesus, the son of Mary does not exceed that which you have said by the length of this stick." Upon hearing this, his generals started to mutter among themselves. Then he turned to Jafar and his companions telling them that they might go wherever they pleased and to know they would never be harmed, not even if he were to be offered a mountain of gold in exchange. The Negus instructed the gifts Abdullah and Amr had brought to be returned to them and so Abdullah and Amr left rebuked without achieving their aim.

REACTION

News of the Negus' statement about Jesus spread rapidly; many were troubled and demanded an explanation, accusing him of abandoning their religion. The Negus now feared for the safety of Jafar and his companions so he gave him enough ships to carry them to safety in the event of him being overthrown. Now that the Negus had made provisions for their safety, he sat down and wrote on a piece of parchment, "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is His worshiper, and His Messenger." Then, he tucked it under his cloak near his right shoulder and went out to face his people. "My people," he said, "do I not have the best claim among you?" The crowd agreed he did. Next he asked, "Then, what is your opinion of the way in which I deal with you?" "Excellent!" came the reply. Then he asked, "What troubles you?" The crowd replied, "You have left our religion, and now say that Jesus is the worshiper of Allah." "What do you say of Jesus," asked the Negus. "We say that he is the son of Allah," they answered. Then, the Negus, putting his hand over the place in his cloak under which he concealed his testimony said, "This!" The crowd were satisfied and thought he had reaffirmed their belief and dispersed. Now that the crisis had been averted the Negus sent word to Jafar that all was well and they could return to their new homes where they could live

in peace and harmony for as long as they wished.

THE WAR

Shortly after the companions had settled in their new homeland, the Negus faced the threat of invasion and took up arms with his troops. The companions agreed to fight alongside the Negus should the need arise, so Zubair, who was the youngest, set off as an observer across the river Nile to the battlefield. Meanwhile the companions prayed for the success of the Negus and within a few days Zubair returned with the news that the battle was over and victory belonged to the Negus. Some years later when Gabriel brought the news of the death of the Negus he informed him that the Negus had died as a Muslim. The Prophet (sa) gently imparted the news to his companions who were saddened by his passing but at the same time grateful to Allah for his conversion. Shortly afterwards, the Prophet (sa) led his companions in the absent funeral prayer for the Negus and they knew from the teachings of their beloved Prophet (sa) that the Negus would receive two very great rewards in Paradise because he had followed two great prophets, Prophets Jesus and Muhammad, peace be upon all the Prophets of Allah.

CHAPTER 37 THE DELEGATION FROM ABYSINNIA

During their stay in Abyssinia, the companions spoke of Islam, its principals and of their beloved Prophet (sa) to their new Nazarene and Christian neighbors. Many of the Koranic narratives were very similar to those the Nazarenes and Christians already knew, however, other narratives were new and this, together with tender, loving accounts they had heard about the Prophet’s character kindled an earnest desire to know more about Islam and its Prophet (sa), for some knew from their Books that another prophet would come and wondered if this might be he. With these matters pressing upon their minds, the Abyssinians decided to send a delegation to Mecca to hear the Prophet (sa) speak first hand, and then return home to report the news to those unable to accompany them.

THE ARRIVAL IN MECCA

Upon reaching Mecca, the delegation went to the Ka'ba where they found Prophet Muhammad (sa). As they made their way across its courtyard they passed by Abu Jahl and a group of hostile Koraysh busy in a meeting, however, their presence did not go unnoticed. The delegation approached the Prophet (sa) and happiness radiated from his face as he greeted and welcomed them to sit down and join him. There were so many questions they wanted to ask about Islam and the Prophet (sa) in his endearing, knowledgeable way answered all in a way that satisfied their hearts. Then, he recited portions of the Koran and their eyes filled, overflowing with tears. They knew without a shadow of doubt that the man before them was indeed the Prophet of Allah, the one whose coming Jesus, the son of Mary had prophesied and that they had been blessed to meet him. When the Prophet (sa) invited them to embrace

Islam they accepted without the slightest reservation. Allah tells us:

"You will find hat the most people in enmity to the believers are the Jews and idolaters, and that the nearest in affection to the believers are those who say: 'We are Nazarenes.' That is because amongst them there are priests and monks; and because they are not proud. When they listen to that which was sent down to the Messenger, you will see their eyes fill with tears as they recognize its truth. They say: 'Lord, we believe. Write us among the witnesses. Why should we not believe in Allah and in the truth that has come down to us? Why should we not hope for admission among the righteous?' For their words Allah has rewarded them with Gardens underneath which rivers flow where they shall live for ever. Such is the recompense of the righteous. But those who disbelieve and belie Our verses shall be the companions of Hell." Koran 5:82-86

From afar, Abu Jahl and his companions monitored the meeting and when the joyous Abyssinians passed them as they left the courtyard of Ka'ba, Abu Jahl and his companions stopped them saying, "Indeed, you are a feeble group. Your people sent you here to bring them news about that man, then after you had sat with him for a short while you renounced your religion and now believe what he says. You are very foolish!" But his words fell upon deaf ears, the happiness of certain belief engulfed their hearts and they returned to Abyssinia to tell their families and friends the good news.

THE MIGRANTS RETURN FROM ABYSINNIA

Some time after the return of the delegation a false report reached Abyssinia that the Koraysh had accepted Islam. There was great happiness amongst the migrants and some, including Lady Rukayyah, daughter of the Prophet (sa) together with her cousins, could not wait to be with the Prophet (sa) once again, for they loved him dearer than anyone else in the world and their separation from him had been a great hardship. However, Jafar and Ubayd remained in their adopted country to preach. It was a long journey but a happy one until they were but a few miles outside Mecca when they learned, to their great dismay, that the report was far from accurate. They knew it would be dangerous to enter Mecca altogether, so it was decided that each family should make their way secretly into its Muslim sector and pray they would not be detected.

CHAPTER 38 THE CESSATION OF THE BOYCOTT

Among the Koraysh were those having close ties to the tribes of Hashim and Muttalib and felt the length of the boycott to be excessive. The first person to take action was Hisham, Amr's son, who had for sometime been sending camels laden with food and clothing into the Muslim sector at night. He was aware that any effort he might take by himself would be wasted, so he went to Zuhayr, one of the two sons of Atika, the Prophet's aunt and asked, "Are you content to eat well, clothe yourself, and marry when you know the circumstances of your relatives?

They can neither buy nor sell, marry nor yet give in marriage. I swear, if they had been the relatives of Abu Jahl, he would never have done this!" "What can I do, I am just one person, if there was another then I would do something to end it!" replied Zuhayr. "There is another," replied Hisham. "Who is it?" asked Zuhayr. "Myself," replied Hisham, "so let us get a third!" replied Zuhayr. Hisham went to Mutim, Adi's son, who was an influential member of the tribe of Nawfal and also the grandson of the brother of both Hashim and Muttalib. Mutim agreed, and asked for a fourth to join them as he warned that the Koraysh would most likely turn against them. Hisham approached Abdul Bakhtari, from the tribe of Asad, who had sided with Hakim when he was caught by Abu Jahl returning flour to his aunt, Lady Khadijah. Abdul Bakhtari agreed and asked for another to join them as there was strength in number, so Hisham approached Zamah, Al Aswad's son, who was also from the tribe of Asad. Zamah agreed but thought it unnecessary for a sixth person to join them. That night the five met together at Hajun, which is a place situated on the outskirts of Mecca. There they agreed that none of them would rest until the pact fastened to the inside of the Ka'ba had been revoked. It was agreed that Zuhayr would act as their spokesman and speak first to the Koraysh on account of his kinship to the Prophet (sa).

THE CONFRONTATION

The next day, when many of the Koraysh gathered near the Ka'ba, Zuhayr and his companions entered its courtyard. Zuhayr circumambulated Ka'ba seven times, then turned to the gathering and said, "O people of Mecca, should we eat and wear clothes while the sons of Hashim suffer on account of their being unable to trade? By Allah, I will not sit until this terrible pact is torn up!" Abu Jahl was quick to rise up in protest saying, "It will not be torn up, you are a liar!" Zamah now spoke up, "It is you who are the liar, we were not in favor of it even when it was written." At that point Abdul Bakhtari interjected, "We are not in favor of its contents, neither do we hold with it!" Both Mutim and Hisham supported their companions whereupon Abu Jahl accused them all of conspiracy. Just then, Mutim went into the Ka'ba to fetch the document. To his amazement termites had eaten all but a short phrase at the beginning of the document that read, "In Your Name, O Allah", and so Mutim brought the remaining portion out and showed to the gathering. Many of the Koraysh had already soften to the words of Zuhayr and his companions, but when they saw the remains of the document they remembered the words of the Prophet (sa) that nothing would remain of it except the Name of Allah, and took it to be an omen and so it was that the boycott finally came to an end. Abu Jahl knew it was pointless to go against the wishes of the crowd so it was with great reluctance that he accepted its termination. News that the boycott had been revoked was delivered to the Prophet (sa) and his followers and there was great rejoicing of thanksgiving to Allah for its lifting.

AN ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE

Although the Koraysh had caused the Prophet (sa) and his companions considerable hardship, the boycott failed to produce a positive result. So once again, the Koraysh directed their

efforts to tempt the Prophet (sa) into modifying his opposition to their idolatrous worship. With this in mind, Waleed, the elderly chieftain of the Makhzum, together with other chieftains went to the Prophet (sa) to suggest a compromise which was that both parties be permitted to practice their religion at the Ka'ba. When it came to important matters, it was the custom of the Prophet (sa) not to respond to a proposition straight away, rather, he would wait for Allah to send down a Revelation to him. On this occasion he did not have to wait long and the answer was revealed in a short chapter, the chapter "The Unbelievers".

"Say: 'O unbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. Nor am I worshiping what you have worshipped, neither will you worship what I worship. To you your religion, and to me my Religion.'" Koran 109

As soon as the Koraysh heard these verses, the brief, peaceful interlude faded into oblivion.

CHAPTER 39 THE YEAR OF SORROW

The year was 619 after Christ, and ten years after Prophet Muhammad (sa), received the first Revelation. It was a time for happiness but also of great sorrow for it was in that year, during the month of Ramadan, that Lady Khadijah, may Allah be pleased with her, returned to her Creator. Out of all the ladies of the world, Allah selected her to be the wife of His beloved Prophet (sa). She was indeed, the best wife for the best husband and had been blissfully married for twenty-five years. Her love and devotion to calling, and to him were unquestionable. A cross word was never exchanged between them, they were the perfect couple and loved being in each other’s company. Lady Khadijah had been the first to accept Islam and her faith was like the brilliance of the brightest planet that causes all the planets and stars to appear dim in the darkest hour of the night. Although Lady Khadijah had known excesses of wealth and luxury she never uttered a single word of complaint when the Holy family’s circumstances had been reduced to the poverty of this materialistic world, rather, she was ever thankful to Allah for whatever came her way. She was charitable and considerate, and never looked down on anyone, and lovingly treated members of her household in the same way as she did her family. Such was the love and care she gave them that none wished to leave her service even when the Holy family’s circumstances were reduced. Whenever she had noticed or heard of someone in a distressed state she had always been there to lend a helping hand and like her beloved husband never turned anyone away. She always looked for the good in people and brushed away anything that might to others have appeared negative. She was both pure in heart, mind, body and soul and was known as the Mother of Believers. Lady Khadijah had been an exemplary mother who dearly loved her children, and raised them to be the best, most loving, obedient children of their time. Many were the days when she would be found fondly playing with them, or, much to their delight telling them the stories of other prophets that her beloved husband had narrated to her. When her two sons returned to Allah, she had been naturally saddened but she trusted in Allah and never complained, and gently comforted her grieving daughters who missed their little brothers. Lady Khadijah had

been the most perfect wife, mother, friend and neighbor, those ladies fortunate to know her wished they had her qualities for she set the standard on earth for every woman who longed for Paradise in the life Hereafter. The Prophet (sa) and his four daughters, ladies Zaynab, Rukayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatima were deeply sorrowed by their loss. However, peace and comfort descended upon them when the Prophet (sa) gently and lovingly told his daughters that many years before, when he had been in retreat in the Cave of Mount Hira, the Angel Gabriel had visited him bearing greetings for their mother from her Lord. Tenderly, the Prophet (sa) told the children of the wonderful news Gabriel had given him, which was, that he should tell their mother that a palace of gold had been prepared especially for her in Paradise where she would no longer suffer from either noise or fatigue. The news of the Gabriel's message comforted his daughters greatly and they were content in the knowledge that Allah had called her home and removed her far from the enemies of her Lord.

THE DEATH OF ABU TALIB

Not long after Lady Khadijah had passed away, Abu Talib was taken ill. The illness proved to be terminal and as he lay on his deathbed he was visited, amongst other notables of the Koraysh tribe, by Utba, Shayba, Ummaya from the tribe of Jummah, Abu Sufyan and Abu Jahl. His visitors were well aware of the bond between the Prophet (sa) and Abu Talib and now that he lay on his deathbed they hoped that the Prophet (sa) would listen to his dying wishes. They approached the subject delicately saying, "O Abu Talib, you know how much we respect you, and now these circumstances have come upon you, and we fear for you. We know the bond you and your nephew share, so ask him to come to you. Give him this gift from us, and take from him a gift for us, which is that he should leave us alone, whilst we, in turn leave him alone -- let him leave us and our religion in peace!" Abu Talib sent word to the Prophet (sa) and when he arrived he spoke to him saying, "Son of my brother, these leaders of your people have come to me asking that both you and they be flexible with one another." The Prophet (sa) replied, "Then give me a word, a word by which they shall rule over both the Arabs and Persians." Excitedly, Abu Jahl replied, "Indeed, by your father, for that we will give you not only one word, but ten more!" The Prophet (sa) replied, "Then you must say, 'There is no god except Allah' and renounce all that you worship except for Him." In exasperation the Koraysh threw up their hands saying, "Muhammad, would you make our gods, one God, what you say is indeed strange!" The leaders realized their mission had been in vain and turned to each other saying, "This man will give us nothing we ask for, we will go our own way and uphold our religion which is the religion of our fathers until Allah judges between us and him!" After the leaders had left, Abu Talib drew the Prophet (sa) to his side and said, "Son of my brother, in my eyes you were not unreasonable." The unshakable love the Prophet (sa) and Abu Talib shared for one another was very deep and the Prophet (sa) longed that his uncle should embrace Islam. Abu Talib had supported him through thick and thin, and when others of his family deserted him, he had always been there, yet he had not submitted himself to Islam but he was ever hopeful. During Abu Talib's last hours, the Prophet (sa) asked him gently, "Uncle, say these words, so that on the Day of Resurrection I may intercede for you." Abu Talib replied, "Son of my brother, if it were not that the Koraysh would think I had just said these

words because I feared death, then I would say them. Yet, if I said them would they be said just to please you?" The time of departure arrived soon after and the angels of death took away Abu Talib's soul. Some scholars of Islam are of the opinion that Abu Talib, the wise man of the Koraysh, had a hidden agenda not to embrace Islam openly. At that time the five pillars of Islam, which are the articles of belief and will be discussed in the appropriate section, had not been revealed and several scholars are of the opinion that he died a believer. His death was not considered to be an integral issue and no further details are available. However, it has been reported in the authentic quotations of the Prophet (sa) that the Prophet (sa) visited the graves of his parents, Abdullah and Amina, and by the permission of Allah raised them from the dead and instructed them in the five pillars of Islam and that they both embraced Islam. It is likely that the same applied to Abu Talib, but Allah knows best.

THE SUCCESSOR TO THE TRIBE OF HASHIM

Now that Abu Talib was dead the leadership of the tribe of Hashim fell to Abu Lahab whose hatred of the Prophet (sa) was well established. As could be expected, Abu Lahab was not prepared to offer him any support and so the persecution accelerated to a new height.

DESPICABLE ACTIONS

One day as the Prophet (sa) offered his prayer at the Ka'ba, Abu Jahl, in his hateful way, said to his four companions, "I wish someone would bring the bowels of a camel with all its dirt and throw it over Muhammad!" Without hesitation, Ukba, Muait's son brought the filth and emptied it over the Prophet's neck as he prostrated. The Koraysh looked on making fun of him, delighting in their attempt to degrade the Prophet (sa), but he remained calm and grieved for their disbelief. Meanwhile, someone told Lady Fatima, the youngest daughter of the Prophet (sa), who was five or six years old, of the disgusting act, and so she ran as quickly as her little legs would carry her to him and removed the filth from her beloved father and cried as she rebuked and cursed Ukba for his foul deed. Ukba was not of a mind to stop his foul behavior in fact he was encouraged. On another occasion as the Prophet (sa) was humbly absorbed in his prayer near the Ka'ba, Ukba approached him with a piece of cloth in his hand, threw it around his neck, pulled it tight and dragged him down until he fell upon his knees. At that moment Abu Bakr entered and saw what Ukba had done and released the Prophet (sa), and in doing so turned to Ukba saying, "Would you kill a man just because he says that Allah is his Lord is his Lord!" There were many such disgraceful, unprovoked acts the Prophet (sa) patiently endured which caused his young daughter to weep, she could not bear to see her beloved father treated so badly. On each occasion the Prophet (sa) would comfort her with words of tenderness and reassure her saying, "Do not cry little daughter, Allah will protect your father," and kissed her as he dried away the tears from her darling little face. In the years that followed, during the first major hostility in Islam, the Encounter of Badr, all those who took part in throwing the camel's filth over the Prophet (sa) were reported by Masood's son to have been killed by the angels of Allah.

CHAPTER 40 THE VISION

The Prophet (sa) was now fifty years old when he saw a vision in which a man came to him carrying a figure wrapped in silk. The man told the Prophet (sa), "This is your wife, look." Gently, the Prophet (sa) unwrapped the silk covering and saw Ayesha, however Ayesha was still a young girl similar in age to Lady Fatima and Abu Bakr had already promised her in marriage Jubair, Mutim's son. The Prophet (sa), who never disobeyed Allah in anything, did not question the vision but thought to himself, "If this is what Allah intends, then it will be." A few nights later as the Prophet (sa) slept peacefully, he saw another vision. This time it was not a man that came to him but an angel carrying a figure wrapped in silk. With respect, the Prophet (sa) asked the angel to show him what was wrapped in the piece of silk, whereupon the angel raised the cover and once more he beheld Ayesha. Again the Prophet (sa) did not question the vision but thought whatever Allah had ordained would surely come to be. The Prophet (sa) had not mention his visions to anyone, not even Abu Bakr, when Khawlah, who had attended to his household affairs since the death of Lady Khadijah suggested he should remarry. Politely, the Prophet (sa) asked if she had anyone in mind to which she replied, "Perhaps Ayesha, Abu Bakr's daughter, or Swaydah, Zamah's daughter," who was about thirty years old and had lost her husband, Sakran, shortly after their return from Abyssinia. The Prophet (sa) modestly asked Khawlah to propose both marriages, so she went to Swaydah who was honored by the proposal and sent word back saying, "Obedient to you, O Messenger of Allah." Upon receiving her acceptance, the Prophet (sa) respectfully requested her to chose one of her tribesmen to give her in marriage. Lady Swaydah chose her brother-in-law Hatib who had recently returned from Abyssinia and shortly after the marriage took place. Meanwhile, Abu Bakr went to Mutim and asked him to release Ayesha from the agreement with his son Jubair. Mutim agreed and a marriage by proxy took place several months after his marriage to Lady Swaydah, however, it was not consummated until many years later during the second year after the migration.

CHAPTER 41 ABU BAKR AND TALHA

Abu Bakr had, until shortly after his conversion, been a wealthy, influential and well respected citizen of Mecca, but now, on account of the boycott, he was no longer wealthy and his influence had dwindled amongst the unbelievers. There had been a time when all would turn to him with their troubles when he would either help financially or give sound advice, but now many of those whom he had helped turned away and shunned him. One day, when Abu Bakr and his cousin Talha were taking a stroll, Nawfal -- whose son, Aswad, had embraced Islam under the hand of Abu Bakr -- in the company of others attacked the pair, tied their hands and feet together and left them lying on the road for passerbys to see and mock. In those days it was customary for the tribe of the injured party to revenge themselves against the offender, but the leaders of the tribe of Taym, to which Abu Bakr belonged, chose to ignore the incident which was a clear indication that they now considered him to be of little or no standing. Now that it was known no action would be taken by the Taym tribe if Abu Bakr were to be harmed

he became the object of persistent abuse so he went to the Prophet (sa) to ask his permission to join those that remained behind in Abyssinia, the Prophet (sa) always had the welfare and safety of his companions at heart agreed so with a sorrowful heart Abu Bakr set out for Abyssinia. As he neared the Red Sea, he met an old friend by the name of ibn Ad-Dughunnah, the chieftain of a small tribe that had settled not far from Mecca and were allied to the Koraysh. Ibn Ad-Dughunnah hardly recognized him and was both shocked and distressed to see Abu Bakr in such an impoverished condition and inquired what had brought about such a dramatic change in his affairs. Abu Bakr related several of the unwarranted hostilities he had faced in Mecca on account of his conversion, then told him that now all he wanted was to be able to worship Allah in peace and to preach during his travels. Ibn Ad-Dughunnah reflected upon former times in wonderment of how people could turn to be so fickle and said, "How could they have done such things? You were without doubt the gem amongst your tribe, in times of trouble you were always there to call upon, your deeds are good, and you always helped others in times of need! Go back, I will support you." Abu Bakr accepted ibn Ad-Dughannah's support and they returned together. Upon reaching Mecca, ibn Ad-Dughunnah declared for all to hear, "People of Koraysh, the son of Abu Khafah has my support -- let no one treat him badly!" The Koraysh accepted the ultimatum, however, a fellow from the tribe of Jummah -- the tribe from whom Abu Bakr had rescued Bilal, demanded, "Tell him to worship his Lord behind closed doors, and to let his prayers and recitation be confined there so that he can neither be seen nor heard. We fear that if our sons or women see him they will be seduced by his ways!" Ibn Ad-Dughunnah turned to Abu Bakr and asked him to comply, and he agreed.

CHAPTER 42 THE JOURNEY TO TA’IF

The people of Mecca knew that Abu Lahab, the new chief of the tribe of Hashim, was not inclined to take action against those who perpetrated the bounds of decency against the Prophet (sa). Now, the road was clear for all and sundry to abuse Prophet Muhammad (sa) and his companions, and so their persecution continued. In hope of spreading the message of Islam and gaining the support of the influential tribe of Thakif, the Prophet (sa) journeyed to Ta'if. Upon reaching the city he went straight to the house of Amr, Umair's son whose sons Abd Yalil, Masood and Habib were its tribal leaders and invited them to Islam, then sought their alliance. The hearts of the brothers were unreceptive, one of them swore that he would tear down the covering of Ka'ba if Allah had sent him as His Messenger. Another mocked the Prophet (sa) saying, "Couldn't Allah have found someone better than you to send!" As for the third brother he said, "By Allah, don't let me speak to you ever again. If you are as you claim, the Messenger of Allah, then you are far too important to speak with me; on the other hand, if you are lying, it is not befitting for me to speak with you!" As the Prophet (sa) endured these harsh remarks with patience and as he got up to leave the brothers called their household and slaves together and encouraged them to hurl abusive statements at the Prophet (sa). The commotion attracted other members of the tribe who joined them and so the Prophet (sa) sought the peace and quite of an orchard belonging to Utba and Shayba. Gradually the crowd

dispersed and the Prophet (sa) tied his camel to a palm tree then sat down under its shade and reproached himself as he supplicated to Allah.

THE NAZARENE SLAVE FROM NINEVEH

Now Utba and Shayba had seen what had happened to the Prophet (sa) and their hearts softened a little toward him so they sent a young Nazarene slave by the name of Addas with a dish of grapes to him. As Addas gave the dish to the Prophet (sa) he looked up smiled and thanked him then took some grapes and before eating them said, "Bismillah". The pronouncement astonished Addas who said, "By Allah, this is not the way the people of this country speak." The Prophet (sa) looked up at him and inquired, "Which country do you come from, and what is your religion?" Addas replied that he was a Nazarene, a follower of Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, from far away Nineveh (Ninawah). The Prophet (sa) heart was full of joy and commented, "From the town of the righteous man Jonah, the son of Mattal." Addas was even more surprised and asked the Prophet (sa) how he knew about Jonah to which he replied, "He is my brother, he was a prophet and I am a prophet." Addas' heart rejoiced and he bent over and kissed his head, then his hands and feet. Meanwhile, Utba and Shayba had been observing the Prophet (sa) from a distance and were disturbed when they saw Addas respecting the Prophet (sa) by kissing him and said to each other, "Look, he is already corrupting our slave!" When Addas returned to them they asked why he had acted as he did. Addas answered, "He is the finest man in this country and has told me things that only a prophet would know." To this Utba and Shayba exclaimed, "Do not let him seduce you from your religion - your religion is better than his!"

THE VALLEY OF NAKHLAH

The Prophet (sa) realized he could expect no help whatsoever from the people of Thakif, so he mounted his camel and set off back to Mecca. Several days had passed and dusk was about to descend but he decided to continue on his journey then take his rest in the valley of Nakhlah -- which is about a days ride from Mecca. Upon reaching the valley he dismounted and offered his prayer. Whilst he was standing in prayer a party of Jinn from Nasibhin happened to pass by and were captivated by his recitation of the Koran and stopped to listen. The jinn were created before humans, and unlike the human who was created from clay and whose father is Adam, the jinn were created from smokeless fire and their father is satan, the stoned and cursed. But before the creation of the jinn and human, the angels were created from light. Despite the fact that satan is the father of the Jinn, there are among them believers. The Prophet (sa) had received several Revelations that spoke of not only mankind but also jinn, in which both were given good news of Paradise and warned of the punishment of Hell. Now, in the valley of Nakhlah he received another Revelation:

"Say: 'It is revealed to me that a party of jinn listened and then said: 'We have indeed heard a wonderful Koran, that guides to the Right Path. We believe in it and we will not associate

anyone with our Lord. He - exalted be the Majesty of our Lord who has neither taken to Himself a wife, nor a son! The ignorant fool among us has spoken outrageously against Allah, we never thought that either human or jinn would ever tell a lie against Allah!'" Koran 72:1-5

THE ROAD TO MECCA

As he set off on the final stage of his homeward journey, the matter of the people of the Thakif's refusal to accept the mercy of Allah weighed heavily upon the Prophet's mind. Not long after he had set off, a Meccan riding a fast horse, caught up with him whereupon the Prophet (sa) expressed his concern to him. The Meccan agreed to ride on ahead of the Prophet (sa) and go to Al Akhnas, Sharik's son to ask him if he would be prepared to ally his tribe to the Prophet (sa). However, Al Akhnas was not considered to be a full-blood member of the Koraysh and sent a reply back to the Prophet (sa) saying that on this account he was unable to help in this matter. When the Prophet (sa) learned of Al Akhnas' refusal, his thoughts turned to Suhail, Amr's son, so he asked the Meccan to return again to Mecca and approach Suhail, but Suhail also declined. The Meccan returned yet again to Mecca, but this time the Prophet (sa) asked him to approach Al Mutim, Adiy's son, who, some time ago, retrieved what remained of the boycott document posted in the Ka'ba. Mutim was agreeable, so the Prophet (sa) entered Mecca with his support, where, fully armed, Mutim stood near the Ka'ba with his sons and nephews and announced that he had allied himself to the Prophet (sa). Abu Jahl was among those present that day and asked, "Are you giving him your support, or are you following him!" "Support of course!" replied Al Mutim.

THE ANGER OF UTBA

One day, Prophet Muhammad (sa), Abu Jahl and some of the leaders of the Koraysh happened to be near the Ka'ba at the same time. In his usual way Abu Jahl turned to some members of the tribe of Abdu Manaf and said in a tone that mocked, "Is this your Prophet, children of Abdu Manaf?" Utba, Rabia's son replied in an angered tone saying, "What is wrong if we have a Prophet or a king!" The Prophet (sa) overheard his reply and spoke to Utba in a kindly reminded, "O Utba, your anger was not for the sake of Allah, but on your own account." Then he turned to Abu Jahl and warned, "As for you Abu Jahl, a great affair will befall you. It will cause you to laugh a little, but weep a lot." Then he spoke to the leaders of the Koraysh saying, "A great affair will come upon you which you will indeed hate." Despite Mutim's inclination toward the Prophet (sa) he did not embrace Islam and died shortly before the encounter of Badr.

CHAPTER 43 THE MESSAGE AND THE TRIBES

It was the time of the pilgrimage and many pilgrims camped outside Mecca before visiting their idols at Ka'ba. It was also the season of many fairs such as the one at Ukaz to which many eloquent poets would gather and compete against one another. The Prophet (sa)

decided to visit the camps of the tribes of Kinda, Kalb, Amir, Maharib, Fazara, Ghassan. Murra, Sulaim, Abs, Nadir, Adhruh, Hudharima, Hanifa, Harith, and Ka'b's son to recite portions of the Koran to them and then ask if they would like to allie themselves, but it was not to be, and the beauty of his recitation as well as his invitation to ally themselves with him fell on deaf ears. The most bitter response to the Prophet (sa) came from the tribe of Hanifa. Later, its chief, Musailima proclaimed that he himself was a prophet! The fair was well underway when the Prophet (sa) approached Bayhara, Firas' son, from the tribe of Amir the son of Sasaa. Bayhara listened to the Prophet (sa) then exclaimed, "By Allah, given this man I could conquer all of Arabia." Then, a thought occurred to him and he asked, "If we give you our allegiance and Allah gives you victory over the enemies of Islam, shall we then be given leadership after you?" To this the Prophet (sa) replied, "The matter rests with Allah." Bayhara didn't like the reply and exclaimed, "Then I think you want us to lend you our support against the Arabs, and then, if Allah gives you victory someone else will reap the benefit - no we do not accept!" Abu Bakr had accompanied the Prophet (sa) when he visited the tribe of Dhul, Shaiban's son - the chiefs of this tribe were Mafruk, Muthanna and Hani, Kabisa's son. When Abu Bakr met Mafruk, Mafruk asked if he had heard about the coming of a Prophet, whereupon Abu Bakr turned towards the Prophet (sa) and introduced him saying, "This is he." Mafruk asked the Prophet (sa) to tell him about the message entrusted to him, to which the Prophet (sa) replied, "There is no god except Allah, and I am His Messenger." Then the Prophet (sa) with the sweetness of his voice proceeded to recite the following verse from the Koran:

"Say: 'Come, I will recite to you what your Lord forbids you; that you shall associate anything with Him; that you shall be good to your parents, that you shall not kill your children because of poverty, We provide for you and for them, that you shall not commit foul deeds whether openly or in secret; and that you shall not kill the soul that Allah has forbidden except by right. With such Allah charges you, in order that you understand." Koran 6:151

The three leaders listened to the recitation and all expressed their liking of the verse, however, they told the Prophet (sa) they were reluctant to abandon the religion of their ancestors because they would loose their authority with their fellow tribesmen. They also pointed out that they had already pledged their allegiance to the King of Persia and as such were already bound. The Prophet diligently (sa) continued to invite all who would listen to Islam and asked their leaders to ally themselves to him. Like Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab viewed Islam as a threat and whenever he heard the Prophet (sa) preaching, he would make it his business to try and break-up the gatherings by crying out, "This man is an apostate, he lies. He is trying to mislead you and wants you to abandon Al Lat and Al Uzza as well as your allies, the jinn from the tribe of Malik!" Although no allies were gained, many had listened to the verses of the Koran and were aware of the message the Prophet (sa) preached.

CHAPTER 44 THE NIGHT JOURNEY AND THE ASCENT

It was during these early years of his prophethood that one of the greatest miracles of all time

occurred. The Prophet (sa) happened to be visiting the house of Hubayrah, the husband of Hind, better known as Umm Hani, the daughter of Fatima and Abu Talib when night fell so they invited him to stay over night. Although Hubayrah had not converted to Islam his wife and mother-in-law had, and so they were blessed to join the Prophet (sa) in offering the night prayer. That night the Prophet (sa) slept but a little, then arose and made his way to his beloved Ka'ba. After a while drowsiness overcame him and he lay down to sleep near the Hijr Ishmael. Whilst he slept, the Angel Gabriel came to him and stirred him with his foot, the Prophet (sa) awoke, sat up, but saw no one and so he settled himself down. The same thing occurred three times, but upon the third time as he looked up he saw Gabriel who greeted him and took hold of his arm to help him arise. Gabriel led the Prophet (sa) to the door of Ka'ba, and there before it stood Burak, a winged white animal from Paradise, greater in size than a donkey but lesser than a mule, with wings on its hind legs. Burak was surrounded by angels on either side but as the Prophet (sa) tried to mount, it shied away, whereupon Gabriel placed his hand on its mane and said, "O Burak, are you not ashamed to behave in such a manner? By Allah, no one that has ridden you before this is more honorable before Allah," whereupon, Burak broke out in a sweat and stood still for the Prophet (sa) to mount. As soon as the Prophet (sa) was seated, the Angels Gabriel and Mikail also mounted. Gabriel sat in front of the Prophet (sa) holding Burak's saddle and Mikail sat behind the Prophet (sa) holding its rein. As Gabriel pointed the way Burak set forth. Each stride it took reached the end of his vision, miraculously breaking the barrier of light which NASA, with all its technical advances has been unable to achieve, and as they passed over the mountains Burak raised his legs higher so that they passed over them in comfort. When Burak reached Jerusalem, he stopped and raised his front leg so that the Prophet (sa) could dismount. There, in Jerusalem, the Prophet (sa) was greeted by several prophets amongst whom were Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, and it was there on the site of the ancient temple of Jerusalem that Prophet Muhammad (sa) led them in prayer. After its conclusion, the Prophet (sa) was offered two goblets, one contained wine and the other milk. The Prophet (sa) chose the goblet of milk and drank from it whereupon Gabriel said, "You have been rightly guided and so will your nation; for wine is forbidden." After this the Prophet (sa) and Gabriel ascended to the nearest heaven. Upon reaching it Gabriel asked for its gate to be opened whereupon its guardian inquired, "Who is there?" "Gabriel," he replied, and "who is with you," asked the guardian. Gabriel replied, "Muhammad," and the gate was opened. The same questions and replies were to be asked and given at the gate of each heaven.

THE FIRST, LOWER HEAVEN

As the Prophet (sa) entered the first heaven all but one of the angels expressed signs of happiness and smiled a welcoming smile. The Prophet (sa) turned to Gabriel and asked about the unsmiling angel and was told, "He is Malik, the Guardian of Hell, he does not smile but if he were to smile at anyone, it would be to you." Whilst the Prophet (sa) was in the first heaven, he saw Prophet Adam observing the souls of the deceased. When a good soul passed by he was very happy and said, "A good soul for a good body," however when a bad soul passed by he would frown and say, "A bad soul for a bad body." Upon seeing Prophet

Muhammad (sa) Prophet Adam welcomed and supplicated for him and asked Gabriel if he had been sent for, and Gabriel confirm that it was so.

THE SECOND HEAVEN

In the second heaven, the Prophet (sa) and Gabriel were met by Prophet Jesus, the son of Mary, and John, the son of Zechariah who also welcomed him and supplicated for him and inquired if he had been sent for. Later the Prophet (sa) described Prophet Jesus as being a man of medium height, straight hair, with a reddish, freckled complexion.

THE THIRD HEAVEN

In the third heaven the Prophet (sa) met Joseph, the son of Prophet Jacob, who was so handsome that the Prophet (sa) described him as being as beautiful as the full moon and had been given half of all the beauty, whereas Prophet Muhammad was given all the beauty. He welcomed and supplicated for the Prophet and also inquired if the Prophet had been sent for and was told that he had. THE FOURTH HEAVEN In the fourth heaven they encountered Idris of whom the Koran speaks: "And mention in the Book, Idris; he too was of the truth and a Prophet, We raised him to a high place." Koran 19:56 - 57

Idris welcomed and supplicated for the Prophet and inquired if he had been sent for and Gabriel affirmed that he had.

THE FIFTH HEAVEN

In the fifth heaven the Prophet (sa) met a handsome man with white hair and a long beard, it was Prophet Aaron, the son of Imran. Like the prophets before him he too welcomed and supplicated for him and inquired if he had been sent.

THE SIXTH HEAVEN

In the sixth heaven he met a man with a prominent nose, similar to those of the people of Shanu'a. The man was Prophet Moses, brother of Aaron and son of Imran, and as before he too welcomed and supplicated for him and inquired.

THE SEVENTH HEAVEN

When Prophet Muhammad (sa) and Gabriel entered the seventh heaven they saw a man sitting on a throne at the entrance of an eternal, crowded mansion - Al Bayt al Mamor. The entrance of the eternal mansion has been explained by scholars as being the entrance to Paradise. The man was Prophet Abraham of whom Prophet Muhammad observed, "I have never seen a man more like myself." It was in the seventh heaven that the Prophet saw a

beautiful, heavenly maiden -- a houri -- and asked to whom she would be espoused and was told Zaid, the son of Haritha. Then he saw angels entering the gates of the mansion and was told that each day seventy thousand angels enter never to return again until the Day of Resurrection. The Gabriel took the Prophet (sa) to the Lote tree of the Furthest Limit. The Prophet (sa) described the tree as having leaves the size of elephants ears and fruit like earthenware vessels. When the command of Allah covers it, that which is covered undergoes a change, the beauty of which none in all creation is able to describe. Thereafter Allah obligated that fifty prayers were to be offered during the day and night. Before the Prophet (sa) left Allah said to him, 'Peace be unto you O Prophet," and the Prophet (sa) replied, 'Peace be unto us all, and good worshipers."

THE PROPHET'S RETURN JOURNEY THROUGH THE HEAVENS

On the Prophet's return through the heavens he met Moses once again who asked how many daily prayers had become incumbent upon him and his followers. When Prophet Muhammad (sa) told him fifty, Moses replied, "Prayer is a weighty matter, and your nation is weak. I have tested the Children of Israel and know by experience, return to our Lord and ask Him to reduce the number for you and your nation." Prophet Muhammad (sa) returned to his Lord and asked for a reduction, and the number was reduced to forty. Once again the Prophet (sa) met Moses upon his return who asked him the same question, whereupon he returned, and so it continued until the number of daily prayers became reduced to five. When the Prophet (sa) met Moses upon his final return, Moses inquired as he had done before, but Prophet Muhammad (sa) told him that he felt ashamed to ask Allah to reduce the number yet again. In later years the Prophet (sa) informed his companions that when they offer each of the five obligatory daily prayers in faith and trust they receive the reward of ten prayers for each obligated prayer. He reminded them that they should be grateful to Moses for the reduction in number. The Prophet (sa) also told his companions that he was told that for whosoever intends doing something good and does not do it, a meritous act is recorded for them, however, if he or she does it they are the recipients of the reward for ten meritous acts. When a person intends to do a wrong action nothing will be written against them, but if the wrong action is carried through then only one wrong action is recorded against them. Peace be upon all the Prophets of Allah.

THE RETURN JOURNEY

Prophet Muhammad (sa) and Angel Gabriel now returned to Burak who waited patiently on the Mount in readiness for the return journey to Mecca. As they sped over the mountains and desert they overtook several southward bound caravans. When they neared Syria a camel saw Burak, took fright and bolted away from its camp. The Prophet (sa) saw where the camel had stopped and as the traders searched for the camel they heard his voice telling them where it could be found. They had reached Dajanan -- approximately twenty-five miles from Mecca -- when the Prophet (sa) saw a caravan and stopped for brief moment. Not far from the sleeping traders was a covered jug of water, he removed its cover, drank the remaining water,

replaced the cover and without disturbing anyone left to continue home to Mecca. The Prophet (sa) arrived in Mecca before dawn and just before it broke he awoke Umm Hani to pray. After the prayer he told her, "O Umm Hani, as you witnessed, I prayed here last night with you in this valley. After that I went to Jerusalem and prayed there. Now, as you have seen, I prayed the dawn prayer here with you." Umm Hani was concerned for the Prophet (sa) and said, "O Prophet of Allah (sa), do not tell anyone about this because they will belie and insult you." As the Prophet (sa) made ready to leave for the Ka'ba he replied, "By Allah, I will certainly tell them," whereupon Umm Hani asked her servant to follow him to make sure no harm came to him and to report back to her.

ABU BAKR'S SINCERE BELIEF

Upon reaching the Ka'ba, the Prophet (sa) told those present, believer and unbeliever alike, about his miraculous journey. Immediately, the unbelievers laughed and mocked him. They did not believe in his miracles and on no account would they believe him now, as the return journey of such distance was known to take well over two months. Gloating in what they deemed to be their triumph, a group of Koraysh made their way to Abu Bakr's house to tell him the news. When they reached him they said, "What do you think of your friend now! He tells us that last night he went to Jerusalem, prayed there and then returned to Mecca!" Abu Bakr's immediate reaction was that they were trying to trick him, for he distrusted his visitors, but as soon as Abu Bakr realized they were in earnest, he turned to them and said, "If he said it, then it is indeed true! What makes you wonder, he tells me greater news that is sent down from the heavens to earth in any hour of the day or night. I know he speaks the truth!" Then, Abu Bakr left his home and went to the Ka'ba and repeated his conviction. When the Prophet (sa) learned of Abu Bakr's forthrightness, he named him "As-Sideek" -- "The Sincere" -- the confirmer of the truth.

THE CARAVAN RETURNS

Among the Prophet's followers were those who needed additional reassurance. They had heard the Prophet (sa) tell of the caravans nearing Mecca and of the camel that bolted as well as the empty jug of water, so they waited for the caravans to return to ask them. One by one the caravans returned and each trader confirmed the incidents.

THE PRIVILEGED FEW

The Prophet (sa) told only a few select companions about his ascent through the heavens and the meeting at the Sidrat Tree. It wasn't until some years later that he narrated the events of his ascent to the rest of the companions. Concerning the Night Ascent it was revealed:

"Indeed it is not except a Revelation which is revealed, taught by One who is Stern in power. Of might, he (Gabriel) stood firm while he was in the highest horizon; then he drew near, and

become close he was but two bows' length or even nearer so (Allah) revealed to His worshipper (Gabriel) that which he revealed (to Prophet Muhammad). His heart did not lie of what he saw. What, will you dispute with him about what he sees! Indeed, he saw him in another descent at the Lote Tree (Sidrat tree) of the ending close to the Garden of Refuge. When there comes to the Lote Tree, that which comes his eyes did not swerve, nor did they stray for indeed he saw one of the greatest signs of his Lord." Koran 53:4-18

CHAPTER 45 THE SIX MEN FROM THE TRIBE OF KHAZRAJ

The time for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca had arrived once again and pilgrims set up camp at Mina before going on to Ka'ba. It had become customary for the Prophet (sa) to journey to Mina each year and speak to the pilgrims about Islam, but all too often he and his message were met with rejection. It was during this season, when the Prophet (sa) was at Aqabah, that he met six men from the Yathrib tribe of Khazraj. The men were anxious to meet the Prophet (sa), many were the times they had heard the Jews speak of the expected Prophet and knew his time must be near at hand as the Jews had expressed their opinion that the signs heralding his appearance had reached their fulfillment. As they sat before him, Prophet Muhammad (sa) recited verses from the Koran and confirmed that he was the expected Prophet they had heard about. He spoke of the principals of Islam and as he did the light of Islam was kindled in their hearts. The Khazrajites asked the Prophet (sa) many questions and his replies satisfied their hearts. None doubted that the man sitting before them was indeed the one the Jews awaited and turned to one another saying, "This is indeed the Prophet the Jews warned us about, don't let them be the first to reach him!" They remembered how the Jews had told them that when he came they would be destroyed on account of their worshipping more than one god, just as the people of Aad and Thamood had been in centuries past, and so they embraced Islam. Before they departed, the Khazrajites told the Prophet (sa), "We left our people because there are no other tribes like them torn apart by enmity and evil, perhaps Allah will unite them through you. We will go and invite them to Islam just as we have accepted it, and if Allah gathers them together on your account, then, no man will be greater than you!"

THE ALLEGIANCE OF AQABAH

The year after the six Khazrajites embraced Islam, twelve men from Yathrib went to the Prophet (sa) to embrace Islam. The men were anxious to learn more about Islam and asked the Prophet (sa) to send one of his companions back with them to teach. The Prophet (sa) chose Musab, Umair's son, who was the grandson of Hashim. When he reached Yathrib they lodged him with respect in the home of a wealthy man of good standing by the name of Asad, Zurarah's son. As the days passed new converts came into the fold of Islam, the only families not to respond to the invitation were those of Katimah, Wa'il and Wakif.

SA’AD THE SON OF MUDAH

Sa’ad was the chief of the tribe of Aws and duly respected among his tribe. One day Musab visited him and invited him to Islam. At first Sa’ad did not incline to the invitation but when he heard Musab recite a portion of the Koran, Allah caused his heart to turn toward Him and he embraced Islam, whereupon he returned to his tribe to invited them to join him.

THE SEVENTY-TWO MEN OF YATHRIB

The following year, when the time for pilgrimage arrived, seventy-two men and women, set forth in a caravan to Mecca. Unknown to the unbelievers in their party were a group of new converts, who, when the time was right, slipped away unnoticed to meet the Prophet (sa) at Aqabah where they affirmed their belief in the Oneness of Allah and embraced Islam. On account of the increased hostilities toward the Prophet (sa) and his companions in Mecca, the Prophet's thoughts turned to migrating with his companions to Yathrib where a strong community of Muslims was now established. However, his own migration was out of the question until Allah made it known to him. When Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet (sa) who had not yet embraced Islam, learned of the Prophet's inclination he became concerned for his safety and reminded him that at least in Mecca his family loved and honored him, and that they had always stood by him against his enemies. On account of his concern, Abbas turned to the party from Yathrib and asked, "If he inclines to live with you, will you support him with your life and body -- if you cannot, tell me." Bara turned and said, "We have been born and raised as warriors", just then Abu Al Haitham interjected saying, "O Prophet of Allah (sa) we are on good terms with the Jews, after this pledge we shall have to break with them. Is it possible that you may leave us to return to your own City when your authority is realized?" The Prophet (sa) smiled reassuringly and said: "No, my blood is your blood, you are mine and I am yours" and he was known as a man of his word. Following this the Prophet (sa) asked them to take a pledge to abandon idolatry, theft, infanticide and to promise to obey him. As they were about to take their pledge, Sa’ad, Zuraha's son, stood up and asked, "My tribesmen, do you understand what is meant by such a pledge, it is a declaration of conflict against Arab and non-Arab alike." His tribesmen replied that they had understood and were ready to pledge their word. Sa’ad’s statement is one of great significance and has regrettably been misunderstood and misinterpreted by some Muslims - especially in the recently emerged bellicose, non-mainstream Wahabi cult - who failed to understand one of the basic, elementary duties of a Muslim to his fellow neighbor. It is not a call for Jihad or for hostilities to be levied against those who have not embraced Islam. Rather, it is obligatory upon all Muslims, especially those who have migrated to a foreign land, to tell their neighbors about Islam and demonstrate its teachings by leading an exemplary life in accordance to the Koran and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (sa). From the gathering, the Prophet (sa) chose twelve men to go out and preach. Nine belonged to the tribe of Khazraj and three from the tribe of Aws. They were: Usayd, Hudair's son, Hudair had been the Aws commander at the encounter of Bu'ath. Abu Al Haitham, Tihan's son. Sa’ad, Khaithama's son, later to be martyred during the Encounter of Badr. Asad, Zurarah's son, who would often lead the congregational prayer on Friday. Sa'ad, Rabi's son, later to be martyred during the Encounter of Uhud. Abdullah,

Rawahah's son, a famous poet, martyred during the Encounter of Mutah. Sa'ad, Ubadah's son, a close companion of the Prophet (sa). Mundhar, Umair's son, martyred at the Encounter of Bi'r Maunah. Bara Marur's son, spokesman during the Allegiance of Aqabah. Bara died before the migration of the Prophet (sa). Abdullah, Omar's son, martyred at the Encounter of Uhud. Ubadah, Al Samit's son, a close companion of the Prophet (sa), transmitter of many prophetic sayings. Rafi, Malik's son, martyred at the Encounter of Uhud.

THE KORAYSH LEARN OF THE ALLEGIANCE AT AQABAH:

The following morning, the Koraysh received word of the pledge and challenged their unbelieving companions who remained ignorant of the meeting. The unbelievers told the Koraysh that what they heard must be just a rumor because if there was any truth in the matter they felt certain they would have knowledge of it.

CHAPTER 46 MADINAT AL NABI (sa) - THE CITY OF THE PROPHET (sa)

Prophet (sa) was satisfied that Yathrib, which in the years to come was renamed "Madinat Al Nabi" -- the City of the Prophet, later to be abbreviated to Medina -- was a safe haven for his companions and ordered all those able to migrate to Medina. When the Koraysh learned of the impending migration they tried to prevent the companions, however, they were unsuccessful and all but a few of the companions were permitted by the Prophet (sa) to remain behind with him in Mecca. In connection with the migration, Allah sent down the verses:

"Except the men, women and children, who, being abased have no means and they are unable to guide themselves to a way. Those, Allah may pardon them, He is the Pardoner, the Forgiver." Koran 4:98-99

THE FIRST IMMIGRANT TO YATHRIB

Abu Salamah's family originated from Yathrib, from the tribe of Asad, however, some of his family had settled in Mecca under the protection and sponsorship of his uncle, the late Abu Talib. Not long after Abu Talib's death, Abu Salamah and his wife Umm Salamah, from the tribe of Mughirah, a branch of the Makhzum tribe, and first cousin to the infamous Abu Jahl, converted to Islam, so they decided to migrate to the safety of Yathrib with their young son Salamah. When the time came to leave, Abu Salamah saddled his camel and seated his wife as she cradled her young son in her arms, and set off walking alongside the camel leading it by a rope. Almost immediately, men from Umm Salamah's tribe perceived their intent and rushed up to Abu Salamah, snatched the camel's rope from his hand saying, "You can do as you like! As for your wife, do you think we will allow her to go with you?" The disturbance caught the attention of Abu Salamah's own tribesmen who were greatly angered by the

situation. In retaliation they grabbed hold of the young child, Salamah, with such force that they dislocated his little arm, and shouted as Abu Salamah was sent on his way, "You have separated her from our kinsman. We will not leave your son with her and you!"

THE GRIEF OF UMM SALAMAH

Umm Salamah was broken hearted and each day she would make her way to a nearby valley where she would weep for the family she had lost. A year or more had passed when one of Umm Salamah's cousins came across her in the valley and as he saw her weeping took pity on her so he returned to his tribesmen rebuking them saying, "You have separated her from her husband and child, why don't you let the poor woman go!" Umm Salamah's tribesmen relented and told her that she was free to go to her husband, and upon hearing the good news, Abu Salamah's tribesmen returned her son to her so that the family might be reunited. Once again Umm Salamah's camel was saddled, and she and her young son mounted then set off by themselves for Yathrib. They journeyed on to Tanim -- which lies approximately six miles outside Mecca -- when they were met by Othman, Talha's son who asked where they were going, and inquired if they were traveling alone. Umm Salamah told him that except for Allah, and her son she was traveling alone in hope of finding her husband. Othman was perturbed by their plight and offered to accompany them to Yathrib. Umm Salamah accepted Othman's kind gesture and so she and her son continued their journey under Othman's protection. Later, Umm Salamah would say of Othman, "Othman is one of the most honorable Arabs I have ever met. When we stopped for a rest he would make my camel kneel for me so that I might dismount and then withdraw and tend to the camel for me. Then, he would distance himself from me and sleep. When evening came, Othman would bring my saddled camel to me, then he would turn away so that I might settle myself. When I was ready he would take hold of the reins and lead us." The days passed and eventually they drew near to the village of Quba, which lies on the outskirts of Yathrib near the ancient lava flows. Othman told Umm Salamah that she would find her husband in the village and to enter it with the blessing of Allah. Now that Othman had accomplished his mission he wasted no time and returned to Mecca knowing that Umm Salamah would soon be safely reunited with her husband.

THE SECOND FAMILY TO MIGRATE TO YATHRIB

The migration of the companions was accomplished in phases over an extended passage of time. Following Abu Salamah's migration, the next to migrate was Amir, Rabia's son, with his wife Leila, the daughter of Hathma.

THE MIGRATION OF OMAR

Omar, Khattab's son, together with Ayyash and Hisham, Al As' son, decided to migrate together, and agreed to meet each other by the thorn trees that grew on land belonging to

the Ghifar some six miles outside Mecca. It was a dangerous time, and so Omar told them that in the event of anyone's failure to reach the thorn trees by the following morning, whosoever was there must not wait but go on as it would be understood that the missing party had been forced to stay behind. Omar and Ayyash reached the thorn trees and waited for Hisham to arrive. There was still no sign of Hisham as the time approached so reluctantly they left for Quba where they stayed with the children of Amr, Auf's son. As they suspected Hisham had been detained, and forced to outwardly apostatize.

ABU JAHL ARRIVES IN YATHRIB

Shortly after their arrival, Ayyash received two unexpected visitors, Abu Jahl and Harith, both of whom were his relatives. Abu Jahl, knowing how much Ayyash loved his mother concocted a story about her that trouble Ayyash deeply. He told him his mother was greatly distressed by his leaving and had taken a vow that she would neither comb her hair, even if it became full of lice, nor would she sit in the shade of a tree but sit unprotected under the blazing heat of the sun until she saw her son again. The thought of his mother's suffering disturbed Ayyash greatly so he went to Omar and told him of her vow. Omar knew well the tricks of Abu Jahl and warned him that in his opinion it was nothing but an attempt to seduce him from his religion and that he must be very careful of them. Ayyash could not be dissuaded and told Omar that he would return to release his mother from her vow and at the same time retrieve some of the money he had left behind. In a final effort to prevent Ayyash from returning with Abu Jahl and Harith, Omar, in the spirit of true brotherhood, told him that he was willing to give him half of his wealth, if only he would stay. When Omar realized that Ayyash was not going to change his mind, he gave him his camel telling him that it was well bred and easy to ride. Omar also advised Ayyash not to dismount and if he detected the slightest suspicion of treachery he could make good his escape on it. Ayyash thanked Omar and gave him the farewell greetings, then set off towards Mecca with Abu Jahl and Harith. After they had traveled some distance, Abu Jahl said, "My nephew, my camel is proving hard to ride will you let me ride with you?" Ayyash agreed and they made their camels kneel. No sooner had the camels knelt, than Abu Jahl and Harith attacked him, bound him tightly and took him back to Mecca where they forced him to apostatize. As Abu Jahl and Harith entered Mecca they called out, "O people of Mecca, deal with your fools in the same way we have dealt with ours!" The news of Ayyash's wretched condition reached Omar and he feared Allah would not accept the repentance of those who apostatized. Omar continued to be of the same opinion until the Messenger of Allah (sa) arrived sometime later in Medina and the following verses were sent down:

"Say: 'O My worshipers, who have sinned excessively against themselves, do not despair of the Mercy of Allah, surely, Allah forgives all sins. He is the Forgiver, the Most Merciful. Turn to your Lord and surrender yourselves to Him before the punishment overtakes you, for then you will not be helped. Follow the best of what has been sent down from your Lord before the punishment overtakes you suddenly, while you are unaware.'" Koran 39:53-55

When Omar heard these verses he wrote them down and sent it to Hisham who was in Mecca. Hisham had difficulty reading so in desperation he supplicated saying, "O Allah, make me understand it!" Allah heard his supplication and Hisham realized that the verses referred to Ayyash and himself whereupon he mounted his camel and set out to rejoin the Prophet (sa) who had by then, migrated to Yathrib.

CHAPTER 47 THE VISITOR FROM NAJD

With the exception of the Prophet (sa) and two of his close companions, Ali and Abu Bakr and his family, only those Muslims stricken by illness or forcefully detained by the Koraysh remained in Mecca. The reason the Prophet (sa) remained behind was that he awaited the sending down of the permission of Allah to migrate, for he never did anything of significance without first receiving an instruction from Allah. On several occasions Abu Bakr had asked the Prophet (sa) for permission to migrate with his family, but each time the Prophet (sa) would say, "Don't be in such a hurry Abu Bakr, perhaps Allah will provide a traveling companion for you." So Abu Bakr waited obediently ever hopeful that he would be permitted to migrate with the Prophet (sa) himself. Although the Koraysh hated having Muslims in their midst, they became increasingly anxious over the matter of their migration to Yathrib, for they knew that they would never migrate there unless they had the support of many of its citizens. The Koraysh chieftains began to fear, with half-hearted contempt, the warnings of the Koran and the Prophet (sa). The warning which bothered them most was: " ... as for you, leaders of Koraysh, a great affair will come upon you that you will indeed hate." So they decided it was time to call a meeting in the time honored house, the House of Assembly, to discuss how they might best rid themselves of Prophet Muhammad (sa). It was agreed by those present to invite other Korayshi chieftains as well as the chieftains of other tribes to the meeting and that the meeting should take place at night. Trusted messengers were then sent to the outlying tribes and upon the appointed night, they and other chieftains met in secret in the House of Assembly. The meeting proved to be less than harmonious as none could agree upon a solution and soon tempers became frayed as raised voices filled the air. All the shouting and arguing subsided when, suddenly, a very loud knock at the door was heard. Someone got up and opened it, and there before them stood a man, unknown to any of them. The newcomer's facial characteristics and clothing were those of the people of the Najd, and so when he told the gathering he was from that region he was not disbelieved -- later, the Prophet (sa) told his companions that the man was none other than satan in disguise. The chieftains invited the newcomer to sit with them and satan inquired the reason for the meeting then asked why there was so much discord between them. The situation was explained to him -- although he already knew it -- so satan asked each of the chieftains to tell him their proposal and listened to them but did not pass a comment, however, the situation changed when it came time for Abu Jahl to present his solution and their visitor listened enthusiastically. Abu Jahl told him that in his opinion, the only way to rid themselves of the Prophet (sa) would be to kill him. However, this was not an easy matter. Abu Jahl went on to say that in his opinion the safest manner would be for each branch of the tribe to select and arm their strongest, most powerful

warrior, then, upon a given night, wait of the Prophet (sa) to come out from his house, then pounce upon him altogether at the same time and kill him. Abu Jahl drew the attention of their visitor and those present, that by killing the Prophet (sa) in such a manner his blood would rest upon all their hands, and not just an individual branch of the Koraysh tribe which would, without doubt, be singled out for the revenge of his killing. Abu Jahl also pointed out that it was reasonable to assume that the family of the Prophet (sa) and his companions would be unlikely to take revenge on all the branches of the Koraysh because not only were they united in the matter, great in number, but much to strong to oppose. Up until that moment, satan had remained silent, but now his eyes darted with delight as he said, "Abu Jahl is right, in my opinion this is the only way to do it!" The chieftains accepted his advice, plans were drawn up and satan left them gloating in his wickedness.

CHAPTER 48 THE MIGRATION

On the night the Koraysh planned to kill Prophet Muhammad (sa) Angel Gabriel visited him and told him he must not sleep in his bed that night. He also gave him the news that Allah had given him permission to migrate. When the Prophet (sa) told Ali Gabriel's news he was delighted and volunteered immediately to sleep in his bed whereupon the Prophet (sa) assured him that no harm would befall him. On account of his honesty, several people had entrusted their valuables to the Prophet (sa) for safekeeping. Now that permission to migrate had been given he could no longer take charge of them so he asked Ali to remain behind and return them to their rightful owners then to come to Yathrib as soon as he had discharged his duty. Later that night, Ali wrapped himself up in the Prophet's cloak and slept soundly on the Prophet's bed.

THE PLAN IS HATCHED

It was the month of Safar and in the still of the night warriors from each branch of the Koraysh concealed themselves around the Prophet's house and lay in wait for him to come out. Some time later during the night the Prophet (sa) emerged from his house and as he did he recited the following verses from the Koran:

"Ya Seen. By the Wise Koran, you (Prophet Muhammad) are truly among the Messengers sent upon a Straight Path. The sending down of the Mighty, the Most Merciful so that you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, and so were heedless. The Phrase has become obligatory upon most of them, yet they do not believe. We have bound their necks with fetters up to their chin, so that their heads are raised and cannot be lowered. We have set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, and, We have covered them so that they do not see." Koran 36:1-9

As he stooped down he picked up a handful of dust and cast it over them. Immediately, a deep sleep descended upon the warriors and the Prophet (sa) passed through their midst

without anyone seeing him. The warriors slept on outside the house of the Prophet (sa) until someone came and woke them asking why they were still there. When they replied they were waiting for the Prophet (sa) to come out, the man rebuked them telling them that he had seen the Prophet (sa) elsewhere in the City, and told them of the dust in their hair. The warriors refused to accept the possibility that the Prophet (sa) had escaped without their knowledge so they entered the house and found Ali, who they mistakenly took to be the Prophet (sa), sleeping peacefully wrapped in the Prophet's green cloak. After having satisfied themselves that the Prophet (sa) was still in the house they continued to wait outside. When Ali awoke they realized that the man had been correct and pandemonium reigned -- the Koraysh plan had been thwarted -- and the warriors returned to their chieftains to raise the alarm.

THE FIRST STAGE OF THE MIGRATION

Upon the noon of that same day, the Prophet (sa) made his way to the house of his dear companion, Abu Bakr. It was unusual for him to visit Abu Bakr at that time of day so instinctively he knew there must be an important reason for his visit. After the exchange of greetings the Prophet (sa) informed him that Allah had given him permission to migrate from Mecca. Abu Bakr asked whether they were to migrate together and when the Prophet (sa) told him they were, he was so overcome with joy that tears rolled down his cheeks. Abu Bakr had hoped that Allah would permit him to accompany the Prophet (sa) so in anticipation he had purchased two strong camels and set aside some provisions for the journey. Abu Bakr offered the Prophet (sa) the finest of the camels, however, on account of the importance of the occasion he declined his generosity saying, "I shall only ride a camel that belongs to me," so the Prophet (sa) bought one from Abu Bakr. In the past, the Prophet (sa) had accepted several gifts from his good friend, but this occasion was different from that of the others. The Prophet (sa) named his camel "Kaswa" and of all the camels he was to own, Kaswa was his favorite. At the back of the house, Abu Bakr had the camels prepared and asked his son Abdullah to accompany them to a cave in Mount Thawr, which lies to the south of Mecca, in the opposite direction to Yathrib. He also asked the shepherd Amir, Fuhayrah's son, whom he had freed from service sometime before, to follow behind them with his flock to obliterate their tracks for the desert Arabs were expert trackers and the camel's hoof prints might easily be detected. It was time to depart so Prophet Muhammad (sa), Abu Bakr with Abdullah riding pillion behind his father mounted their camels and set off for Mount Thawr and left Mecca undetected. After they had been riding for a while, the Prophet (sa) brought his camel to a halt and looked back in sadness at his beloved City and said, "Upon all the earth of Allah, you are the dearest place to me, and the dearest to Allah, had my people not driven me out from you I would not have left you." When they reached the caves of Mount Thawr, Abu Bakr told his son to return to Mecca with both camels and instructed him to pay attention to any plot he might hear. Abu Bakr also told his son to return only when he felt it was safe to do so and to bring fresh supplies. It was common place to see camels being driven into Mecca so Abu Bakr felt his son would not be in any immediate danger, also, it was logical to suppose the Koraysh would be searching for the Prophet (sa) on the road to Yathrib and not on the road to Yemen, at least for a while.

THE REACTION OF THE KORAYSH

The Koraysh were deeply angered that the Prophet (sa) had slipped through their fingers. They searched Mecca from beginning to end but there was no sign of him, nor could anyone throw light upon his whereabouts. Abu Bakr had left his daughters, Ayesha, who was now seven years old, and her elder sister Asma with his wife Umm Ruman in Mecca. Eventually several members of the Koraysh, including Abu Jahl, suspected that Abu Bakr might have accompanied the Prophet (sa) so they went to his house to demand his whereabouts. Ayesha answered the door and when she told them that she did not know where her father was, Abu Jahl struck her with such force that her earring flew off. Abu Jahl and his companions failed to extract the information they sought and so they left in the hope that they would be more successful elsewhere. In the meantime, the Koraysh chieftains offered a substantial reward of no less than one hundred camels for his capture. The lure of owning such a herd encouraged many parties to set off on the road to Yathrib in search of him. Three days had now passed but this time when Abdullah and his sister Asma brought provisions they also brought news of the reward that had been offered. Abu Bakr then told his son that the next time he came he should bring Abdullah, Arkat's son to guide them on to Yathrib and that they should also bring enough provisions for the journey and their camels. Although Abdullah, Arkat's son had not yet embraced Islam, Abu Bakr knew him to be not only reliable but trustworthy, and was confident he would never betray them.

THE SCORPION

There were many caves in Mount Thawr and when they found one which was suitable, Abu Bakr had entered first on that eventful first day of the migration. However, as he entered he had noticed there were several holes in both its walls and floor and feared they might be home to snakes or other poisonous insects, or even reptiles, so he looked around the cave and found some stones to plug them. He had almost finished plugging them when he ran out of stones. He searched for some more but there were none to be found so he tore pieces of cloth from his garment and pushed them deep down into the holes. When the Prophet (sa) entered he lay down and rested his head upon Abu Bakr's lap and slept. Only one hole remained unplugged, as there had be insufficient cloth with which to plug it so Abu Bakr lodged his elbow in it to seal the hole. As the Prophet (sa) slept, a scorpion that had been hiding in that very hole bit Abu Bakr. The bite was extremely painful, yet Abu Bakr, whose manners where of such high quality, did not move, nor yet did he cry out in pain as he feared he might disturb the Prophet (sa) whilst he slept. The pain increased as the flesh around the bite became red and very swollen as the poison took effect. At last a tear fell from Abu Bakr's eye onto the Prophet (sa) before he could catch it and the Prophet (sa) awoke. When he saw the very pained expression on his face he was troubled and asked what ailed him whereupon Abu Bakr told him of the scorpion's bite. Prophet Muhammad (sa) said, "Bismillah" and treated the bite with his salvia and breath and immediately, both the pain and swelling left him -- Abu Bakr had been blessed with a miraculous cure.

A CHANGE OF DIRECTION

By now the search parties had exhausted the roads leading to Yathrib so they started to look in other directions so it wasn't surprising that one such party decided to search the caves of Mount Thawr. As they neared Mount Thawr. Allah caused yet another miracle to occur, a spider spun a huge web across the entrance of the cave, and a pair of pigeons gathered some twigs from a nearby tree, then built a nest beneath the web on the ledge. When the search party reached the Mount they explored the caves thoroughly and as they neared the cave the female pigeon settled herself on the nest and laid her eggs whilst her mate perched nearby. The shouts and tramping of footsteps grew nearer and nearer. Soon, footsteps could be heard on the ledge directly above the cave. Abu Bakr became alarmed at the thought of being discovered and whispered to the Prophet (sa), "If they look under their feet they will see us!" In his gentle, reassuring manner, Prophet Muhammad (sa) consoled him saying, "What do you think of two people who have Allah with them as their third?" When Abu Bakr heard these words peace descended upon him and his fear vanished. Shortly after, one of the search party noticed the cave underneath the ledge on which he was standing and peered over to take a better look at it. When he saw the spider's web and the pigeon sitting on its nest he told the others that it would be a complete waste of time and effort to climb down to check the cave as he was sure it must be empty on account of the nest and the spider's web. Another peered over the ledge and agreed saying the cob-web was so old that it must have been spun before the Prophet (sa) had even been born! The bounty hunters agreed and left not knowing how close they had been to the Prophet (sa) and his companion. As for the pigeons, their descendants are those that fly around Ka'ba today. That night Abdullah and his sister Asma, accompanied by Amir, the shepherd, who came without his flock this time, and Arkat's son Abdullah, made their way with the camels to the cave where they were awaited. When they reached the mountain, Abdullah and his companions waited for the Prophet (sa) and Abu Bakr to descend its slope. Asma had packed a bag full of provisions for the journey, however, in her haste she had forgotten to bring a rope to secure them on to the camel's back. Being a resourceful young lady, she untied the rope belt from around her waist, divided it in two and tied the bag securely onto the camel then used the remainder as her belt, from that time onward she was often referred to with tenderness as "she of the pair of belts.″ And so the Prophet (sa), Abu Bakr and their guide set out on the second stage of their migration to Yathrib, soon to be renamed Medina, whilst his children and the shepherd returned in safety to Mecca.

THE JOURNEY TO YATHRIB

Abdullah, Arkat's son, knew the trails of the desert well for he was a very experienced guide. It was decided that it would be more prudent not to go straight on to Yathrib, but to make an extensive detour and so Abdullah led the holy party across the desert to the sea near a village called Usfan.

UMM MABAD

At a place called Kudayd they met an old lady named Umm Mabad, and asked if she would sell them some milk and meat. Meanwhile Prophet Muhammad (sa) had noticed a weak goat lagging behind the others in the herd, it was evident that its udder was dry, so he went to it, massaged its udder then miraculously milked it. There was so much milk that it filled a large jug and they all took their fill whilst Umm Mabad looked on in amazement. After they had enjoyed the milk, the Prophet (sa) massaged its udder again and filled the jug to the brim with milk and gave it to Umm Mabad, then they continued on their journey. From that time onward the goat never ceased to produce milk in the morning and night, and lived up until the caliphate of Omar, the son of Khattab. Later, when Umm Mabad's husband returned she told him how a blessed man happened to have passed by and showed him the jug of milk then related what had happened. Her husband asked her to describe the man whereupon she described him in detail and her husband exclaimed, "By Allah, this is the companion of the Koraysh, if I see him I will follow him!" Umm Mabad had no idea she had been in the company of the Prophet (sa) and had not been shy to observe his features; it is through her observations and another like her that we receive a detailed account of his physical description. During their migration they were to encounter a slave shepherding his master's flock, when they asked if they might buy some milk the slave told them that none yielded milk and that the one that lambed the year before way now dry. Once again, the Prophet (sa) gently took the sheep, milked it three times and the shepherd embraced Islam.

THE ENCOUNTER WITH SURAKA, MALIK'S SON

Suraka, Malik's son, who was the son of Ju'shum, was among the bounty hunters with high hopes of capturing the Prophet (sa) and claiming the handsome reward of one hundred camels. One day as Suraka attended a tribal meeting, a man from the tribe of Madlij approached and told him that only a short while ago he had observed silhouettes in the distance riding by the beach and wondered if it might possibly be that Prophet (sa) and his companion. Suraka was quick to realize that the party was indeed most probably that of the Prophet (sa) however, he wanted to claim the reward for himself so he told the man he must be mistaken as he had seen a party from Mecca earlier on that day set off in the same direction. Suraka waited for an hour or two to pass, then armed himself with his bow and arrows, ordered his slave to bring his horse round to the back of the house and set off toward the shore. When Suraka came within sight of the Prophet (sa) Abu Bakr spotted him and cried out, "O Messenger of Allah, we have been discovered!" Whereupon the Messenger of Allah with calmness of voice replied, "Never," and supplicated to Allah for their safekeeping. Immediately, the legs of Suraka's horse started to sink deep into the sand whereupon Suraka cried out in alarm to the Prophet (sa) saying, "I know you have supplicated against me, supplicate for me and I will act as a decoy for you; neither shall I harm you nor will others harm you." No sooner had the words left his mouth and the Prophet (sa) supplicated than the legs of his horse were raised up out of the sand and he rode on to catch up with the Prophet (sa). Upon catching up with the Prophet (sa) Suraka offered him his provisions, but the

Prophet (sa) politely thanked him and declined. Then, quite unexpectedly the Prophet (sa) asked, "How would you like to wear the robes of Chosroes (the King of Persia)?" Suraka was astonished and knew that the word of the Prophet (sa) would surely be fulfilled so he requested the statement to be written down for him as a sign, and so Abu Bakr wrote it down on a piece of leather which Suraka then placed in his quiver for safekeeping and returned to Mecca. Suraka kept his promised and told no one of the encounter. In the years that followed when the Prophet (sa) was returning from the Encounter of Hunayn, Suraka met him again and embraced Islam. Suraka's tribe opposed the Prophet (sa) for many years and in the years that followed when Khalid was sent to remedy the matter, Suraka interceded for them but it was not until after the opening of Mecca that they all embraced Islam. The promise made to Suraka was fulfilled during the caliphate of Omar when the possessions of Chosroes came into the keeping of Omar. Omar was an upright caliph and had heard Suraka’s story and in obedience to the Prophet (sa) and in the honorable spirit of Islam, Omar sent for Suraka and placed the crown of Persia upon his head then gave him the regalia and belt of Chosroes.

THE MEETING WITH TALHA

At sometime during their migration a small caravan was spotted traveling toward the holy party. However, there was no cause for alarm as it belonged to none other than the cousin of Abu Bakr, Talha who was returning to Mecca with merchandise from Syria. Talha had broken his journey in Yathrib and told Prophet Muhammad (sa) that the news of his migration had already reached them and that the Muslims anxiously awaited his arrival. As they parted company, Talha told them that as soon as he had sold his merchandise in Mecca it was his intention to join them in Yathrib.

THE JOURNEY TO YATHRIB CONTINUES

From Usfan the holy party journeyed to a place outside Amaj, then after passing Kudayd by way of Al Kharrar and Thaniyyatu'l Marra they went on to Likf where they watered their camels. From Likf they journeyed to Marjih of Dh'l Ghadwayn then on to the valley of Dhu Kashr. After crossing the valley they made their way to A'da passing by Al Ajrad and Dhu Salaam by way of Al Fajja. Before they reached the valley of A'da, one of the camels started to show signs of weakness so a man from the tribe of Aslam by the name of Aus, Hujr's son took the Prophet onto the outskirts of Yathrib on his camel.

THE RECEPTION IN QUBA

Each morning at dawn after Fajr prayer, the believers of Quba, a suburb of Yathrib, would make their way to the lava mounds near the fertile oasis which marked the City limits and anxiously awaited the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (sa). There, they would stay until no shade was left to protect them from the harsh, relentless rays of the sun. It was now midday, Monday 12th Rabi'ul Awwal, the Prophet's birthday, the sun had reached its height and the

gathering had returned to the shelter of their homes when a Jew happened to observe the small party making its way to the lava mounds. The Jew had heard of the Prophet's expected arrival and called out loudly: "O children of Kayla, your luck has arrived!" There was much rejoicing as the believers rushed from their homes and raced back toward the lava mounts where they found the Prophet (sa) resting with Abu Bakr under the shade of a palm tree. As they approached the Prophet (sa), he smiled tenderly as the ladies and children burst into a song of welcoming they had composed in honor of the occasion:

"The full moon has appeared before us from Thaniyyat, (the Place of Farewell). Thanks is obligated upon us whenever an inviter of Allah invites."

Prophet Muhammad (sa), was greatly moved by their sincere welcome and exhorted his new companions saying, "O people, greet one another with peace, feed the hungry; honor the ties of kinship, pray when others sleep and you shall enter Paradise in peace." This simple, yet beautiful song of sincerity in praise and love of the Prophet (sa) was among the first to be composed and sung in his presence. It is important for all those who love Allah and His Prophet (sa) to realize that the Prophet (sa) neither objected nor forbade such compositions and we would do well to remember the words of Allah that say:

"Allah and His angels praise and venerate the Prophet. Believers, praise and venerate him, and pronounce peace upon him in abundance." Koran 33:56 One of the most famous poets during the life of the Prophet (sa) was Hassan, Thabit's son. His poetry extols and praises the virtues of the Prophet (sa) and is recited by the lovers of the Prophet (sa) to this very day. Such was the of acceptance of his poetry by the Prophet (sa) that he requested Hassan's seat to be raised in the Mosque so that everyone in the congregation would be able to hear and enjoy his poetry. The Prophet (sa) also informed Hassan that the Arch Angel Gabriel would defend him continuously whilst he was defending Allah and His Prophet (sa). Since that time and throughout the centuries, there have been many well-known Sufi (Ihsan) poets who continued in the same excellence. One such poet being Berzinji Bosairi whose poetry touched the heart and soul of so many that it was printed in gold. In more recent times, the late Yusuf Ishmael of Nabahan, Mufti of Beirut, Lebanon wrote the most endearing poetry in praise and love of the Prophet (sa). However, the Wahabi cult that emerged from the Najd in Saudi Arabia last century - and one would do well to remember the historical fact reported earlier on in this book of how satan, disguised as a man from the Najd consulted with the unbelievers of Mecca as to the most effective way in which they should kill the Prophet (sa), and thereafter the authentic warning of the Prophet (sa) that the horn of the devil would appear from the Najd - proclaimed that Mufti Yusuf Ishmael, on account of his poetry praising the Prophet (sa), as being a heretic and he like so many other innocent, true lovers of the Prophet (sa) became either hunted or martyred by the fanatical Wahabi cult. Such has been the false influence of the innovated Wahabi cult that many innocent Muslims are now confused and fearful of reading these beautiful poems and have either overlooked or neglected the preceding verse.

A MATTER OF LODGING

It is uncertain in whose home the Prophet (sa) stayed first in Quba, however, it has been reported that it was either the home of Kulthum, Hidm's son or else the home of Sa'ad Khaythama's son. The same circumstances apply to the lodging of Abu Bakr, he either stayed with Khubaub, Isaf's son from the children of Harith or with Kharija, Zayd's son.

ALI JOINS THE PROPHET (sa) AT QUBA

A few days after the Prophet (sa) had set out on his migration Ali was able to complete his task of returning all the valuables entrusted to the Prophet (sa). He was now able to journey to Yathrib and it was there at Quba that he finally caught up with him and was lodged in the house of Kulthum.

THE FINAL STAGE OF THE MIGRATION

Word reached the Prophet (sa) that the people of the City of Yathrib anxiously awaited his arrival. However, before his departure three days later, the foundations for the Mosque of Quba were laid after Kaswa, the Prophet"s camel led by an angel showed the Muslims where it was to be built. Prophet Muhammad (sa) arrived at Ranuna, in Yathrib at noon that Friday. A large crowd had accompanied the Prophet (sa) amongst whom were some of his kinsmen from the tribe of Bani Najjar that had ridden from Yathrib to meet him in Quba. There, in the valley of Ranuna he met members of the Khazrajite tribe, the children of Salim. Their combined numbers were approximately one hundred and it is there, in his new homeland, that the Prophet (sa) led his followers in the first Friday congregational prayer. After the prayer, Itban, Malik's son and Abbas, Ubada's son, together with people from the tribe of Salim invited the Prophet (sa) to live with them. However, the Prophet (sa) graciously declined their kind offer saying that he would settle wherever his camel sat down to rest because Kaswa, his camel had been ordered and was being led by an angel. Kaswa wandered pass the homes of the children of Bayaa, and it was there that the Prophet (sa) was met by Ziyad, Labid's son and Farwa, Amr's son with more of their fellow tribesmen. They too offered the Prophet (sa) the same invitation but he declined graciously with the same reply. Invitations abounded from everywhere amongst whom were those of Sa'ad, Ubada's son and Al Mundir, Amir's son; and Sa'ad, Rabi's son and Kharika, Zayd's son, and Abdullah, Rawaha's son from the tribe of Harith, Al Khazraj's son but once again the Prophet (sa) declined and replied in the same manner. At last the camel came to a house the Prophet (sa) remembered well from his childhood days, it was the home of his maternal relatives, the children of Adiyy, Najjar's son. His maternal relatives invited him to stay with them, but he told him his camel was being led by an angel and would take him to the place where he would stay. Kaswa wandered on towards the houses belonging to the children of Malik, a branch of the Najjar tribe. Amongst their tribesmen were Asad and Awf, two of the six men that pledged their allegiance to the Prophet (sa) during the first pledging at Aqabah the year before. When Kaswa reached the buildings she wandered into a walled courtyard in which there were a few date palms, a place

used to dry dates, an ancient grave yard and a building that had fallen into a state of disrepair. Asad had constructed a modest prayer area within the confines of the courtyard, and slowly Kaswa made her way to it then knelt down. The Prophet (sa) let go the reins but did not dismount, then, after a moment she got up and walked away. She had not gone far when she turned around and walked back to the place where she had knelt, once again she knelt down but this time settled herself upon the ground and Prophet Muhammad (sa) dismounted saying, "If Allah wills, this is the place." The Prophet (sa) then asked who owned the courtyard and so Mu'adh, the brother of Awf told him that it belonged to Sahl and Suhayl, two orphaned boys fostered by Asad. The Prophet (sa) smiled as he asked for someone to bring the boys to him, but they were already in the gathering and stepped forward. He asked the boys whether they would sell the courtyard to him, but they refused saying, "No, we will give it to you, O Messenger of Allah!" The Prophet (sa) was touched by the generosity of the orphans but insisted that he should pay them for it and so with the help of Asad a price was determined. During this time Abu Ayyoub Khalid, who lived nearby, had unloaded the Prophet's baggage from Kaswa and had taken it into his house. Once again the Prophet (sa) was besieged with invitations from his followers, but he declined saying, "I must be where my baggage is." And so the Prophet (sa) stayed in the home of Abu Ayyoub who had been the first of his tribe to pledge allegiance during the second pledging at Aqabah. The girls of the household and the neighboring households were so happy to have the Prophet (sa) staying there that they went out to meet him beating their drums singing:

"We are the girls from the children of Al Najjar, Muhammad is the best neighbor!"

Once again, the Prophet (sa) smiled as he listened to the song and neither objected nor forbade the girls to sing or beat their drums. Abu Ayyoub's house had two storeys, so he and his wife moved upstairs leaving the ground floor for the Prophet (sa). Each meal-time they would take the Prophet (sa) his food and ate whatever remained, putting their fingers in the imprint of the Prophet's in anticipation of receiving a blessing. Shortly after, Prophet Muhammad (sa) gave the Muslims of Medina a new title, from now on they were referred to as the "Ansar" - the "Supporters". As for those that migrated, they were also give a new title and referred to as the "Muhajir" - the "Emigrants". Allah honors these companions by mentioning them together with their reward in the Koran saying:

“As for the first outstrippers among the migrants and supporters and those who followed them in doing good, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared for them gardens underneath which rivers flow, where they shall live for ever. That is the greatest winning.” Koran, 9:100

THE BUILDING OF THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE

Immediately after his arrival in Medina, the Prophet (sa) together with the elated band of followers started work on building the Mosque, the graveyard was removed and the ground

prepared, some brought stones whilst others made adobe mud bricks for its walls. The palm trees that once stood in the courtyard were felled and prepared for use as support pillars for the Mosque's roof that was made from palm branches whilst the floor remained bare. It was a time for thanksgiving and throughout its building the happy band of Muslims would be heard supplicating to Allah asking Him for His Mercy and Help on both the Ansar and Muhajir saying: "O Allah, if it was not for You we would not have been guided neither would we have fasted nor prayed. Therefore send down upon us Your tranquility (Sakina) and strengthen us when we meet in times of war." At the end of the Mosque they erected another roofed area. It was to become the home of those who embraced Islam but had neither family nor a home of their own. Upon the completion of the Mosque, the Prophet's home, consisting of two very simple, small apartments was built onto the side of the Mosque. One for Lady Swaydah and the other for Lady Ayesha. Now that the Mosque and the Prophet's home were ready, he sent Zayd and Abu Rafi with two camels and five hundred dirhams to Mecca to bring his daughters and Lady Swaydah to their new home in Medina. Abu Bakr also sent word to his son Abdullah that the time was right for them to migrate with his mother and sisters, Lady Ayesha and Asma to Yathrib. However, two of the Prophet's daughters were unable to return with Zayd and Abu Rafi', one was Lady Rukiyyah whose husband, Othman, was still in Abyssinia, and the other was Lady Zaynab whose husband refused to permit her to migrate, and so Zayd and Abu Rafi' returned with Ladies Fatima, Umm Kulthum and Swaydah.

CHAPTER 49 A TIME FOR READJUSTMENT

Most migrants arrived in Medina with only a few possessions. Before their migration some had been in a position to re-establish their wealth but as they had been forced to leave their homes in secrecy they were unable to take most of their possessions with them and all they had left behind was now seized by the Koraysh.

THE BONDING OF THE ANSAR AND MUHAJIR

A day or so shortly after his arrival, the Prophet (sa) called the Muslims together and took one man from the Ansar and another from the Muhajir then announced: "Each of you is a brother to the other," whereupon each Ansari household took a Muhajir family into its own and shared all they possessed with them. The Prophet (sa) took Ali for his brother and made Hamza the brother of Zayd. The Ansars gleaned their livelihood from farming the fertile land of the oasis whereas the Muhajirs had been traders and knew little about cultivating the land, so it was decided that the Ansars should keep their orchards and groves and divide its produce with their Muhajir brothers. Such was the extent of the brotherhood that when an Ansar died his property was inherited not just by his family but by his extended Muhajir family. Allah refers to this in the Koran saying:

"Those who believed and migrated from their homes and fought for the Way of Allah, and those who sheltered them and helped them they are truly the believers. Theirs shall be

forgiveness and a generous provision." Koran 8:74

The generosity of the Ansars was widespread and it wasn't long before the Muhajir had settled themselves to their new life. Abu Bakr set up business trading in cloth and Omar took to trading that took him as far away as Iran whereas some of the others traded on a lesser scale, however, they remained poor.

THE SUFFA

Amongst the Ansar and Muhajir were those that lived in the communal room adjoining the Mosque known as "As-hab al Suffa". These companions rarely took to trade or farming, and then when they did it was only as a means to an end. Instead, they preferred to devote their lives to prayer and spiritual discipline under the guidance of the Prophet (sa). These people had neither wives nor children, however, marriage was not forbidden to them like the monks of Christianity. The Suffa, better known as Sufi contented themselves with the bare necessities of life; as a means of support they would also be seen gathering bundles of firewood and selling it in order to feed themselves and their companions. They were extremely poor and none could afford two garments, instead they would wear a single piece of cloth fastened at the neck that reached a little above the knee. Whenever the Prophet (sa) received a charitable gift of food, he would divide it amongst them and encourage his followers to feed them. Many were the times that the Suffa did not eat on two successive days. On account of their lack of nourishment some would faint during prayers, which prompted the opponents of Islam to ridicule and denounced them saying they were either epileptic or else mad. The Suffa as well as other companions were blessed on many occasions and miraculously fed through the blessings of the supplication of the Prophet (sa). Among these occasions was the time when the Prophet (sa) called the Suffa together to eat from a single plate of food over which he had supplicated. Each of the Suffa, and there were many, ate until they were completely satisfied and after all had left, the same amount of food that had first been served remained on the plate.

ABU HURAYRAH, THE SUFI

Seven years later, Abu Hurayrah, the famous reporter of prophetic quotations embraced Islam and joined the ranks of the Suffa. It is through him that we are blessed to receive so many of the prophetic quotations known as Hadith. Abu Hurayrah had an excellent memory and would precisely memorize the words of the Prophet (sa). When asked why he had not taken to trade or some other profession, he informed his inquirer that he was too occupied listening to the Prophet (sa) and preferred to remain in his company. Unlike her son, Abu Hurayah's mother had not embraced Islam and this was of great concern to him so he went to her one day and tried yet again to persuade her, but she resisted and said something disagreeable about the Prophet (sa) that deeply upset Abu Hurayrah. When the Prophet (sa) saw Abu Hurayrah weeping he asked what was troubling him, whereupon he reluctantly told him what had

happened and asked the Prophet (sa) to supplicate for his mother whereupon he supplicated, "O Allah, guide the mother of Abu Hurayrah to the Straight Path." Later on that day, Abu Hurayrah went to visit his mother and as he approached her home she recognized his footsteps and called out to him asking him to wait outside for a minute. As he waited he heard the sound of the splashing of water, and a few minutes later, after she had dressed, she opened the door and said, "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet." She had taken the major bath of purification before embracing Islam. Abu Hurayrah, means father of the kitten, he was given this endearing name on account of a kitten he befriended that would curl up and sleep in the sleeve of his shirt.

CHAPTER 50 THE JEWS OF MEDINA

PROPHET MUHMAMMAD (sa), THE DIPLOMAT

Although the majority of Jews in Medina refused to accept Prophet Muhammad (sa) as a prophet, they knew it was in their best interest to ally themselves to him as he had become the most influential person in Medina so they went to him, without coercion, and a written contract was drawn up to which both parties pledged they would abide. The contract afforded fair benefits to both Muslim and Jew. Amongst the contractual articles was that if a Muslim or Jew were harmed then the harmed party would receive the support of both Muslims and Jews alike. It was also agreed that in the event of war they would fight as one party against the pagans, and that the expense would be shared equally. It was also agreed that neither Muslim nor Jew would enter into a separate peace treaty behind the back of the other. The Jews acknowledged the Prophet (sa) to be both fair and diplomatic, so they willingly agreed that if a dispute should arise between a Muslim and a Jew, the matter would be decided by him. One day, a Muslim thinking he would have the support of his fellow Muslims, took advantage of a Jew. The issue was taken to the Prophet (sa) and the Jew received his rights. On the surface things appeared to be in harmony, but the underlying resentment of the Jews lay dormant for the time being. There were also members of the Arab tribes of Aws and Khazraj who said, when they were invited to believe, they believed. However they did not, to them it was simply a matter of politics, some doubted the Message whilst others were hypocrites. It was during this era that Allah sent down the second chapter of the Koran, the Cow chapter, in which the likeness of those who believe and those who disbelieve is clarified. In the latter verses the Prophet (sa) and the believers were made aware that things were not always as they seemed:

"That is the (Holy) Book where there is no doubt. It is a guidance for the cautious (of evil and Hell). Who believe in the unseen and establish the (daily) prayer; who spend out of what We have provided them. Who believe in that which has been sent down to you (Prophet Muhammad) and what has been sent down before you (to Prophets Jesus and Moses), and firmly believe in the Everlasting Life. These are guided by their Lord; these surely are the prosperous.

Those who disbelieve, whether you forewarn them or not, they will not believe. Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and ears; their sight is dimmed and for them is a great punishment. There are some people who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day,' yet they are not believers. They seek to deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive none except themselves, though they do not sense it. There is a sickness in their hearts which Allah has increased. For them there is a painful punishment because they lie. When it is said to them, 'Do not corrupt in the land,' they reply, 'We are only reformers.' But it is they who are the evildoers, though they do not sense it. When it is said to them: 'Believe as (other) people believe,' they reply, 'Are we to believe as fools believe?' It is they who are the fools, if only they knew! When they meet those who believe they say, 'We, too believe.' But when they are alone with their devils, they say to them: 'We follow none but you, we were only mocking.' Allah will mock at them and prolong them in sin, blundering blindly." Koran 2:2-15

Later on in the same chapter, Allah informed the Prophet (sa) and his followers of the jealously the Jews harbored towards them:

v "Many of the People of the Book wish they might turn you back as unbelievers, after you have believed, in envy of their souls, after the truth has been clarified to them. So pardon and forgive until Allah brings His command. Allah is Powerful over everything." Koran 2:109

PROVOCATION

There were among those who did not believe people who would seize any opportunity that came their way to cast doubt upon the prophethood of Muhammad (sa). On one such occasion a camel belonging to the Prophet (sa) happened to stray whereupon an unbeliever seized the opportunity to jeer saying, "Muhammad claims that news comes to him from the heavens, yet he does not know where his camel is!" When the matter was reported to the Prophet (sa) he was not angered and replied, "I only know what Allah permits me to know. Now He has made it known to me that her halter has become tangled in the branches of a tree in a valley which I will describe." Then the Prophet (sa) described the valley whereupon some of his companions recognized the valley in which she was and went to retrieve the camel. When they reached the valley they found the camel's halter had indeed become tangled in the branches of a tree and brought it back to the Prophet (sa).

THE TROUBLEMAKER

Among the Jewish tribe of Kaynuka was an elderly man known for his ability to stir up trouble. Before the advent of Islam and the Prophet's arrival in Medina, the tribes of Aws and Khazraj had been continually at each other’s throat and consequently many conflicts were fought. The Jew felt uneasy about the newly established bond between the tribes and wished to see an end to it. With this object in mind he connived a plan to break up this newly established peace. In recent years, there had been a conflict between the two tribes. In an effort to

reinforce their numbers the tribe of Aws had sent a delegation to Mecca to enlist the support of the Koraysh. However, the Aws were not successful as the Koraysh deemed it more prudent to remain neutral in the matter and not long after the conflict at Bu'ath had ensued. Both sides had written impassioned poetry in tribute of their warriors expounding the merits and virtues of their tribe over the other. The Jew knew of a young man with a very fine, provocative voice who knew both these tribal poems and persuaded him to go and sit amongst the newly established friends and recite the poems to them. The result was exactly as the Jew planned, soon old passions were re-ignited, wounds reopened, memories revived and a call to arms ensued. As the tribes of Aws and Khazraj made their way to the lava mounds outside Quba to fight the matter out, news of the impending breach in the peace reached the Prophet (sa). Together with the Muhajirs they made haste to the lava mounds; the conflict was about to erupt when the Prophet (sa) reached them and called to them passionately saying, "O Muslims!" he continued: "Allah, Allah -- would you do as you did in the Days of Ignorance even though I am with you? Allah has guided you to Islam, and honored you with it and rid you of your pagan ways saving you from disbelief, and has united your hearts!" Immediately, the two sides realized they had been easy victims of pride so they laid down their arms and the Jew's scheme came to naught. This fine example of the immediate response to the remembrance of Allah, obedience to His Prophet (sa), and the unifying brotherhood of Islam in extenuating circumstances is one that in many cases, in this day and age, been unfortunately forgotten or overlooked, and the Words of Allah neglected or even disregarded. He says:

“Believers are indeed brothers, therefore make things right among your two brothers and fear Allah, so you will be subject to mercy.” Koran 49:10

The Prophet (sa) warned: “When two Muslims oppose each other with swords, both the killer and the murdered will be in Hell.” A companion asked, “O Messenger of Allah (sa) surely, it is only the killer. What about the one who has been killed?” The Prophet (sa) answered, “The other was also eager to kill his companion.”

THE DEATH OF TWO COMPANIONS AND TWO ADVERSARIES AND THE FIRST BORN IN MEDINA

During the first year after the Prophet's migration, Kulthum, Hidm's son, and Asad, Zurarah's son passed away. Both of the companions had been very close to the Prophet (sa). It was in Kulthum's house that the Prophet (sa) had stayed during part of his time in Quba, Kulthum had been especially kind to the migrants and given many of them a home. Asad, Zurarah's son had been among the first men of Yathrib to pledge his allegiance at Aqabah and it was in his house that Mus'ab, Umair's son, the envoy of the Prophet (sa) stayed in the very early days of Islam in Medina. Later, Asad had become the Imam of his tribe, the tribe of Najjar. There were those in Medina who chose to take these deaths as an argument against the prophethood, contending that if Prophet Muhammad (sa) had been a prophet, then these deaths would not have occurred. When the Prophet (sa) heard what was being said he was

not angered but commented, "I have no power with Allah either for myself or for my companions." It was also during this first year that the infamous enemies of Islam, Waleed, Mughirah's son, father of Khalid and As, the son of Wa'il Sahmi, the father of Amr, who was later to become the famous Opener of Egypt died. Asma, the eldest daughter of Abu Bakr and her husband Zubair were blessed with a son whom they named Abdullah. Up until that time no child had been born to a Muslim family in Medina.

THE CHIEF RABBI OF THE TRIBE OF KAYNUKA

Ben Shalom was the Chief Rabbi of the tribe of Kaynuka and also the most knowledgeable Jew in Medina. He had already learned of the Prophet's teachings from traders returning from Mecca and was in no doubt that he was the one prophesied in the scriptures, for his message, description and circumstances exactly matched those he had learned by heart, however, he decided to conceal his conviction until he had a chance to meet him. The time of year had come when the palm trees needed tending in his aunt's garden so he climbed to the top of one of them and set about his work. As he busied himself, a man from the children of Amr, the son of Auf, came bearing the news that the man the Arabs called the Prophet (sa) had reached Quba and was staying there. Much to the surprise of his aunt Khalida, who was sitting below the tree, Ben Shalom was so excited that he exclaimed, "Allah is Great!" and climbed down the tree. His aunt was surprised by his exuberant outburst and said, "Indeed, you could not have made so much fuss if you had heard that Moses, the son of Imran had come!" Ben Shalom replied, "My aunt, he is the brother of Moses and upholds his religion, he has been sent with the same mission!" His aunt inquired if he really thought that this man could be the long expected Prophet, whereupon he told her that he had absolutely no doubt whatsoever that he was for all the signs had been fulfilled in him. Without further hesitation, Ben Shalom went to Quba to meet the Prophet (sa) and embraced Islam taking the name Abdullah -- worshiper of Allah. Upon his return to Medina he spoke to his family and encouraged them to embrace Islam. However, he concealed his conversion from his fellow Jews for a while longer as he anticipated an adverse reaction. Abdullah had always been an exemplary figure to his community and knew both their strengths and weaknesses. He had, on many occasions, spoken of the prophecy and told his congregation that his time was near at hand, however, he knew it would be hard for all but the humble to accept the fact that the prophethood had been taken away from the Jews but hoped that through his example they would trust him and accept Prophet Muhammad (sa). He also recognized the fact that once his conversion became known he would most likely be denounced by his former colleagues, who, as a result, would no longer utter a good word about him. So, when the Prophet (sa) reached Medina, he visited him and requested him to call the other rabbis and leaders of his tribe together and ask them for their opinion of him, not as a matter for self-esteem but as a matter of exposition. The invitations were delivered and the rabbis and tribal leaders accepted. When the time arrived, Abdullah Ben Shalom concealed himself in the Prophet's house and awaited their arrival. Upon their arrival the Prophet (sa) welcomed them in his usual hospitable customary way and gave them food and drink, then, during the course of the conversation asked their opinion of Ben Shalom. Without hesitation they spoke highly of him telling the Prophet (sa) that he was their

chief rabbi, in fact he was the son of their former chief rabbi and without doubt the most knowledgeable among them. Upon hearing their witnessing, Abdullah Ben Shalom stepped forward and said, "O Jews, fear Allah and accept what He has sent you, indeed you know that this man is the Messenger of Allah (sa)." Then, before his peers he declared his acceptance of Islam. Immediately the rabbis and leaders no longer had a good word to say about him, rather they began to rebuke and spurn him, which was a complete reversal of their attestation just a few moments before. Later Abdullah was heard to say, "I recognized him as soon as I saw him, in the same way that I know my son, rather, my knowledge of him is even greater." Allah endorses the fact that the rabbis were able to recognize Prophet Muhammad (sa) from his description in their Holy Books by saying:

"Those to whom We have given the Book, know him (Prophet Muhammad) as they know their own sons. But a party of them conceal the truth while they know." Koran 2:146

RABBI ZAYD

Another rabbi embraced Islam, his name was Zayd, Sa'nah's son. However, he did not embrace Islam immediately as he was not as knowledgeable as Abdullah. Later he explained the reason for his delay saying, "In the Prophet's face there were characteristics. I recognized all of the signs except two because I had not as yet had the opportunity to observe them. They are that his kindness is swift when facing the ignorance of others, and the second is that the more foolishness directed towards him only increases his kindness."

CHAPTER 51 LIFE IN MEDINA

THE FIRST ADHAN - CALL TO PRAYER

Up until this time, Muslims used their own judgment to determine the time of prayer by estimating the sun's passage through the heavens and as a result they arrived at the Mosque to pray at varying times. This state of affairs concerned the Prophet (sa) who asked his companions if they had any suggestions as to how best they could announce the due time of prayer. Several suggestions were made, amongst which was the hoisting of a flag, rattling a wooden clapper and the blowing of a horn. However, these suggestions were not acceptable to the Prophet (sa). Not long after, Abdullah, Zayd's son had a vision. In his vision a man with a clapper in hand, dressed in a green robe passed by, Abdullah noticed the clapper and asked if he would sell it. The man asked why he wanted it whereupon Abdullah told him that he wanted it to call his fellow Muslims to prayer. The man told him that he knew of a better way than that which was that the call to prayer should be made by a caller in this manner.

"Allah is the Most Great, Allah is the Most Great, Allah is the Most Great.

I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, I bear witness that there is no god except

Allah, I bear witness that there is no god except Allah,

Come to prayer, come to prayer.

Come to success, come to success.

Allah is the Most Great, Allah is the Most Great.

There is no god except Allah. there is no god except Allah."

Abdullah went to the Prophet (sa) and told him of his vision and Omar mentioned that he likewise had seen a similar vision. Happiness encompassed the Prophet's face as he told Abdullah and Omar that they had both seen true visions and informed them that this was the method they would now use to call the people to prayer. The Prophet (sa) then asked one of his companions to look Bilal and ask him to come to him -- the former slave that had been so badly torture for his belief. Bilal had a very pleasant voice and Abdullah was asked to teach him the words with which he was to call the worshippers to prayer. Bilal was honored to be chosen as the caller to prayer, and from that time onward, before each prayer, he made his way to the roof-top of the highest house near the Mosque and the sweetness of his voice would ring out across the City calling believers to the prayer. Later on the Prophet (sa) told his companions that when the call to prayer is made, satan, the stoned and cursed, turns his back and rushes away belching to prevent him from hearing the words of the call. The reason for his running away and belching is that all those who hear the call to prayer become a witness to it and satan does not want to be a witness. However, once the call has finished he returns until the second call to prayer is made, then he runs away again only to return after it has finished to distract the minds of worshippers with his whispering, "Remember this, remember that", putting in the mind of the believer irrelevant matters until he/she does not know how many units of prayer they have offered.

LADY SWAYDAH AND LADY AYESHA

When Lady Swaydah arrived in Medina she lived in her quarters built onto the outside of the Mosque together with the daughters of the Prophet (sa). Later on Lady Ayesha came to live in the room next to her. Lady Ayesha had known the Prophet (sa) from a very tender age, she loved to be in his company and after his marriage to her he would often play and run races with her, but although he was very capable of out running her he always, out of the kindness of his heart, let her win until she was mature. Although she was married to the Prophet her life had changed but a little, she still played with her girl friends from Mecca and also made new friends with the girls of Medina. However, the parents of her friends had taught their daughters that they must at all times respect the Prophet (sa) and not to make a nuisance of themselves. Fearing that he might disturb her, Prophet Muhammad (sa) would often take great delight watching her play with her friends from behind a curtain. However, if her friends

happened to realize he was there they would stop playing and try to slip away, whereupon the Prophet (sa) would reassure them that there was no need for them to go and to continue enjoying themselves. On many occasions he would sit down and join them in their games, just as he had done with his own daughters for he loved children and never turned them away. Once, when the Prophet (sa) returned home after a journey he found Lady Ayesha playing with a small wooden horse that had a piece of cloth attached to its back. The Prophet (sa) was amused and inquired why she had tied the cloth to its back whereupon Lady Ayesha replied, "O Prophet of Allah (sa), don't you know, it is the winged horse of Solomon," and the Prophet (sa) smiled as happiness spread over his caring face.

ILLNESS IN MEDINA

The native people of Medina were, for the most part, immune to the fevers that came during certain seasons of the year, however, for strangers who happened to be in the City during these seasons there was always the risk that they might contract them. One day, Lady Ayesha went to visit her father, Abu Bakr, and found that he, Bilal and Amir had been taken ill with the fever, although Bilal was nearing recovery he remained extremely weak. She spoke to her father but he answered her in a rhyme and she did not fully understand, although she remembered his words. Amir and Bilal also spoke to her in rhyme but once again she remembered them but did not fully comprehend. Seeing them in such a pitiful condition distressed Lady Ayesha greatly so she returned home to the Prophet (sa) to tell him of their circumstances. The Prophet (sa) comforted her and gently asked what they had said so she repeated their words, whereupon the Prophet (sa) supplicated saying, "O Allah, make Medina as dear to us as You have made Mecca, or yet even dearer. Bless its water and grain for us and remove the fever from it as far as Mahya'ah." Allah accepted the supplication and they were no longer ill.

CHAPTER 52 A THREAT FROM MECCA

THE LETTER

It is obligatory upon Muslims to protect their soul, the honor of their womenfolk, and wealth, but also to show mercy. No matter how good the philosophy of turning the other cheek may be for an individual in insignificant day-to-day affairs, it spells suicide for a community when it is implemented as an absolute value. One might have supposed that the Prophet's circumstances in Medina were easier than in Mecca, and in may respects that was indeed the case. However, in Mecca it had been easy to determine who had given themselves to Islam and who had not. In Medina the situation was somewhat different. Many of its citizens had embraced Islam, however, several had done so not out of conviction but because they feared the loss of their status within their tribe as more fellow tribesmen started to embrace Islam. These people posed an undetectable source of treachery which was a factor the Prophet (sa) had not had to contend with in Mecca. Until this time, Medina had little or no influence on the

affairs of Arabia, it had just been a place on the trade route where caravans would stop, replenish their supplies, sell their wares then go on their way. As such it had been impervious to outside affairs, however, now that the Prophet (sa) had settled there, the Koraysh viewed Medina in a different light. It was not long after his arrival that the Prophet (sa) met with neighboring tribes outside Medina and as his reputation had preceded him they gladly contracted alliances that closed the access of the northern trade routes to the Koraysh who used to pass through Medina. This meant that from now on the Koraysh caravans would have to use the coastal road on their journeys and their paths would not cross. However, shortly after the Prophet's arrival in Medina, the Koraysh sent a letter to Abdullah, Ubbay's son, who was a newly elected chieftain. The letter read: "You have sheltered one of our men. We tell you either to kill him or throw him out of Medina. If you do not, we swear by Allah we will attack, destroy you and seize your women." When the Prophet (sa) learned of the Koraysh letter, he went to Abdullah and asked if he intended to fight against his own kinsmen for many of them had embraced Islam and were now his supporters. Abdullah weighed the implications and decided to ignore the letter. The Koraysh had not only persecuted Muslims for their belief, robbed them of most of their possessions before and after their migration, but now the threat of war loomed large on the horizon. It was obvious they had no intention of letting Islam and its followers live in peace; their intent was annihilation.

THE FIRST ATTACK ON MEDINA

The first physical act of aggression by the Koraysh on the Muslims of Medina was perpetrated by Kerz, Jabir's son. Kerz, together with a marauding part set off from Mecca with the intent of looting whatever property belonging to Muslims they could lay their hands on. Just outside Medina they came across and seized Sa'ad, Wakkas's son and Utba, Ghazwan's son and took them back to Mecca as prisoners together with a flock of sheep and a herd of camels. This was the first attack which was soon followed by several similar incidents.

PERMISSION TO FIGHT FOR DEFENSE OR REVENGE

Under the patient guidance of the Prophet (sa) the Muslims had never taken a physical aggressive stand against their adversaries, for permission to do so had not been received from Allah. Even when they had been subjected to outrageous provocation they had restrained themselves by reciting the Words of Allah to state their case. One must not suppose them to have been faint hearted in such matters, rather they controlled themselves, and obeyed their Prophet (sa). It was about this time that Allah sent down the following verse:

"Permission is given to those who fight because they were wronged. Allah has power to grant them victory: those who have been unjustly driven from their homes, just because they said: 'Our Lord is Allah ....'" Koran 22:39-40

But Allah also warned:

"Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you, but do not aggress. Allah does not love the aggressors." Koran 2:190

This last verse is a clear warning to all Muslims that they must not be the first to aggress. It was not the Prophet (sa) who instigated the state of war, persecuted or pillaged, on the contrary, it was the Koraysh who were the open aggressors. Now, permission had come to the Muslims to assert themselves, stand up for their rights, and take back that which had been stolen from them. With the possible threat of war on the horizon, and the command to fight because of the wrongs afforded them, the Prophet (sa) sent observation parties of migrants to monitor caravans. From time to time they received news from their allies of caravan movements, however, more likely than not, by the time the news reached them, the Koraysh caravans were no where to be found. However, the time was not wasted as successful treaties were negotiated with several Bedouin tribes along the coast of the Red Sea.

ELEVEN MONTHS AFTER THE MIGRATION

Eleven months had passed since the Prophet's migration when, in the autumn, news of a richly laden caravan escorted by a hundred armed men led by Ummaya, the chief of Jummah, was reported. Ummaya was one of Islam's greatest opponents and so the Prophet (sa) called upon the help of the Ansars to assist the Muhajirs rid themselves of their adversary and seize the spoils of war as restitution. However, Ummaya and his caravan eluded them and there was no encounter.

THE SECOND YEAR

Two months into the second year after the migration news of another caravan on its way to Syria led by Abu Sufyan, from the tribe of Shams came. The Prophet (sa) and his companions set off in search of the caravan, but the news they had received was old and when they reached Ushayrah, which lies in the valley of Yanbu, near the Red Sea, their adversaries had long gone. The cooler winter months were upon them and the number of caravans to the north dwindled. Since the time of their ancestor Hashim, caravans had taken advantaged of these cooler months to cross the inhospitable, desolate, southern part of the desert to Yemen. The month was now Rajab, one of the four sacred months in which fighting is not permissible, when news reached Medina that a caravan making its way from Yemen was nearing Mecca. The Prophet (sa) decided to send his cousin Abdullah, Jahsh' son with eight of the Muhajir on a reconnaissance assignment. Before leaving, Abdullah was given written instructions and told not to read them until they reached a certain place. When they reached the given place, Abdullah read the instructions that told him to journey on to Nakhlah, observe the Koraysh and return with the news. There were no orders to attack the caravan. Upon reaching the valley of Nakhlah, they concealed themselves not far from the main route and sat in wait. This time the information was correct and the Koraysh caravan stopped for a while not far from where the Muhajirs had positioned themselves. From their vantage point they observed that

among the caravaners were those from the very hostile tribe of Makhzum who had been responsible for great harm to the Muslims. Abdullah was in a quandary not knowing what to do, he was unsure if the pre-Islamic rules not to fight during the Sacred Months still applied or not, and pondered deeply upon the verse:

"Permission is given to those who fight because they were wronged." Koran 22:39

The Sacred Month was nearing its end, and the moon of Shaban was expected that same night, however, Abdullah knew that if he waited until the sighting of the new moon was visible, the caravan would be miles away and no doubt have entered the sacred precincts of Mecca in which no fighting at any time is permissible. Abdullah reflected upon the numerous occasions they had been so unjustly persecuted, provoked and plundered for no other reason than their belief in One God, Allah, and so it wasn't until after a great deal of deliberation he gave the order to attack. As they fired their arrows, the arrow of Wakid, Abdullah Tamini's son struck and killed Amr Hadrami, and ally of the tribe of Shams. The caravaners realized they were outnumbered and their chances of survival were small indeed, so Othman Hadrami, from the tribe of Makhzum and a freed man named Hakam surrendered. However, Nawfal, the brother of Othman managed to escape and returned to Mecca but now there was a blood feud with which to contend. Abdullah and the Muhajirs returned to Medina with their prisoners, camels and spoils. When they reached Medina they divided the spoils among themselves, leaving one-fifth for the Prophet (sa) to distribute as charity. When Abdullah and his companions took the spoils to the Prophet (sa) and presented them to him, he declined to accept it reminding them, "I did not order you to fight in the Sacred Months." Abdullah and his companions were greatly distressed by the Prophet's refusal, and were rebuked by their fellow Muslims for their violation of the Sacred Month. The unbelievers of Medina took it upon themselves to say that this was indeed a bad omen for the Prophet (sa) and made great issue of the matter. As for the Koraysh, they falsely accused the Prophet (sa) for being responsible for the violation of the Sacred Month of Rajab. Abdullah and his companions were devastated, it had not been their intention to disobey the Prophet (sa) and had acted only after a great deal of heart-searching, but the fact remained, they had not been given permission to fight. After a while relief came to them when Angel Gabriel brought down the verse from Allah that said:

"They ask you about the Sacred Month and fighting in it. Say: 'To fight in this month is a grave (offense); but to bar others from the Path of Allah, and disbelief in Him, and the Holy Mosque, and to expel its inhabitants from it is great with Allah. Dissension is great than killing. They will not cease to fight against you until they force you to renounce your religion, if they are able. But whosoever of you recants from his religion and dies an unbeliever, their works shall be annulled in this world and in the Everlasting Life, and those shall be the companions of Hell, and there they shall live forever." Koran 2:217

Now that this verse had been revealed, the Prophet (sa) knew that Abdullah and his men had been absolved and accepted a fifth of the spoils which were then distributed as charity.

Abdullah and his companions asked the Prophet (sa), "May we hope that this will count as a raid for which we shall receive a reward as combatants?" For they were more anxious to receive the reward of Allah than the worldly spoils they had repossessed. The Prophet (sa) in his customary manner did not reply straight away and waited until the following verse was sent down from Allah:

"But those who believe and those who migrate and struggle in the Way of Allah, those, have hope of the Mercy of Allah, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." Koran 2:218

THE RANSOM

Meanwhile, the tribe of Makhzum sent ransom money to Medina for Othman and Hakam. However, Sa'ad and Utba who had been taken prisoners by Kerz remained in Mecca and the Prophet (sa), who was always concerned for the welfare of his companions, did not wish to place them in life threatening situation so he sent a message saying, "We will not accept your ransom until our two companions are returned. If you kill them, we will kill your two." After Sa'ad and Utba had been released and arrived safely in Medina, the Prophet (sa), who was not one to break his word, released Othman and Hakam, however, Hakam expressed his wish to embrace Islam and remained in Medina whilst Othman returned to Mecca where he died an unbeliever. Hakam, on the other hand, was later to become a martyr at the encounter of Bi'r Ma'una.

CHAPTER 53 THE SECOND YEAR AFTER THE MIGRATION

THE DIRECTION OF PRAYER

In Medina there were now three communities, Muslims, People of the Book and unbelievers. The Jews, Nazarenes and Christians of whom their were a handful, or People of the Book as the Koran refers to them, offered their prayers in a common direction, which was Jerusalem, as it was there that many Prophets had preached. The unbelievers on the other hand would turn themselves toward their many idols housed within the confines of Ka'ba in Mecca. Sixteen months had now passed since the Prophet's migration and during this time he had offered his prayers in the direction of Jerusalem rather than the direction of Ka'ba. However, his heart was far from being settled about the matter. Instinctively, he wished to offer his prayer facing the direction of Ka'ba, the House his ancestors, Prophets Abraham and Ishmael rebuilt so many centuries before, but the fact that there were so many idols in and around it prevented him from doing so. The matter weighed heavily upon his heart, then Allah directed him in the following verses that were sent down at the time of the mid-day prayer on a Tuesday, sometime in the middle of the month of Shaban.

"We have seen you turning your face towards the heaven. We shall surely turn you to a direction that shall satisfy you. So turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque (built by

Abraham); wherever you are, turn your faces to it. Those to whom the Book was given know this to be the truth from their Lord. Allah is not inattentive of what they do. But even if you brought those to whom the Book had been given every proof, they would not accept your direction, nor would you accept theirs; nor would any of them accept the direction of the other. If after all the knowledge you have been given you yield to their desires, then you will surely be among the harmdoers." Koran 2:144-145

and

"The truth comes from your Lord, so do not be among the doubters. And for everyone is a direction for which he turns. So race in goodness. And wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together. He has power over all things. From wherever you emerge, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. This is surely the truth from your Lord. Allah is never inattentive of what you do. From wherever you emerge, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque, and wherever you are, face towards it, so that the people will have no argument against you, except the harm-doers among them. Do not fear of them, fear Me, so that I will perfect My Favor to you and that you will be guided." Koran 2:147-150

From that time onward the Prophet (sa) and his followers offered their prayers facing the direction of the Ka'ba in Mecca. The Mosque in which the verses were sent down was known from then onwards as "The Mosque of the Two Kiblas" - kibla meaning direction of prayer. Before the advent of the Nazarenes and Christians the Jews directed their prayers towards Jerusalem and prided themselves that the Nazarenes and Christians, and up until now, the Muslims had done the same, thereby acknowledging their importance through its religious significance. Without doubt, Islam acknowledges the significance of Jerusalem as a very Holy site and the changing of the direction of prayer was by no means to demean it. But to the Jews, Jerusalem was not just a Holy place, it had become an important status symbol which served to enhance their self proclaimed superiority. For many years, the unbelievers respected the Jews, admiring the adeptness and business acumen. Such was their admiration that when faced by the death of a child they would often take a vow that if the child was spared they would have him raised as a Jew. When Allah changed the direction of prayer to Ka'ba, the Jews were very displeased, as they perceived it to be an outright rejection of their social status and this caused further resentment. The Muslims had not in fact rejected its religious significance at all, but the Ka'ba, the House which Abraham had built, the first House of Allah on earth, had been the direction chosen by Allah for Muslims to face during prayer. Soon after, the Jews dormant resentment of the Prophet (sa) and the Message given to him by Allah began to surface. False accusations that he pursued a policy of opposition against them were common, for many of the verses in the recently revealed sections of the Cow chapter exposed the concealed corruption of their ancestors and revealed their present day contempt. Their pride prevented them from acknowledging that some of their ancestors had clearly wronged themselves and that they themselves would follow parts of the Torah that were acceptable to them whilst neglecting or rejecting other parts. Their contention that they were the chosen ones of Allah, despite the fact that they defied, killed and rejected many of their prophets

including their last prophet, Jesus, the Messiah, the son of Mary, who warned them that if they did not reform, the covenant would be taken away from them. Among the Muslims were some whose faith was yet to mature, they also questioned the changing of the Kibla to the Ka'ba, forgetting that the order was not the decision of the Prophet (sa) but that of Allah who warned that the Jews and unbelievers would question the redirection:

"The fools among the people will say: 'What has made them turn away from the direction they were facing?' Say: 'The east and the west belong to Allah. He guides whom He will to a Straight Path.'" Koran 2:142

"... We did not change the direction that you were facing except that We might know who followed the Messenger from him who turned on both his heels. Though it was a hardship except for those whom Allah has guided. Allah is Gentle with people, the Most Merciful." Koran 2:143

"Righteousness is not whether you face towards the east or the west. But righteousness is to believe in Allah, and the Last Day, in the angels and the Book, and the Prophets, and to give wealth however cherished, to kinsmen, to the orphans, to the needy, to the destitute traveler, and to the beggars, and to ransom the slave; who establish their prayers, and pay the obligatory charity..." Koran 2:177

CHAPTER 54 PRELUDE TO THE ENCOUNTER OF BADR

THE CARAVAN OF ABU SUFYAN

There was unrest amongst the unbelievers, the Jews and hypocrites of Medina for each concealed either their own tribal or racial grudge. When news that Abu Sufyan, and his caravan -- which included a member from each branch of the Koraysh tribe -- had set out on its return journey from Syria laden with merchandise, the Prophet (sa) called the Muslims together and informed them of his intent to attack so that the Muslims might have at least some of their former wealth restored to them. Shortly after this, the Prophet (sa) sent Talha and Sa'id, Zayd's son to reconnoiter the area near the coastal village of Hawra that lies approximately one hundred miles from Medina. At Hawra, Talha and Sa'id were met by the chief of Juhaynah who took them under his protection and concealed them in his home until Abu Sufyan's caravan has passed by.

THE CONSPIRACY OF THE UNBELIEVERS AND JEWS

Despite their alliance, the unbelievers and Jews of Medina conspired against the Prophet (sa) and sent word to Abu Sufyan informing him that he could expect to be attacked. Abu Sufyan was alarmed and hired Damdam, Amr Al Ghifari's son to hasten on to Mecca to rally the Koraysh to come out and join him in defense of the caravan as he feared the attack to be

imminent.

NEW REACHES MECCA

Damdam did not spare his camel as he sped onto Mecca at break-neck pace. In order to draw immediate attention to the urgency of the matter when Damdam reached the valley of Mecca he severely mutilated his camel, slitting its ears and cutting of its nose, then he turned his saddle backwards, tore his shirt and screamed the news at the top of his voice as he entered the City. The alarm soon spread through every quarter of Mecca, for they knew the caravan was richly laden and also, each tribe had one of their own accompanying it. Abu Jahl immediately called the Koraysh chieftains, its warriors, and in fact all men able to fight, to prepare themselves and met him in the precincts of Ka'ba. Utba, Rabia's son was appointed their Commander-in-Chief, and the combined Koraysh army looked formidable. There were no less than nine-hundred and fifty armed soldiers, seven hundred camels and three horses with more than adequate provisions to feed themselves. The tribe of Adi, however, decided not to partake in the forthcoming hostilities and remained behind. Two other people also declined, they were Abu Lahab and Ummaya, Khalf's son. Abu Lahab told Al-As, Hisham's son, that if he were to go in his place he would release him from the substantial debt of the four thousand dirhams he owed him. Al-As accepted his offer as he had no other way in which to repay the debt. As for Ummaya, he was elderly and rather corpulent, so he decided not to go. However, his honor was challenged by Ukba, Abu Mu'ayt's son who sought him out near the Ka'ba with a vessel of burning scented wood and insulted him by saying, "Perfume yourself with this -- you belong with the women!" Outraged, Ummaya got up saying, "May Allah curse you and what you have brought!" and rode off to join the others who had already set off to engage the Prophet (sa). Meanwhile Abu Sufyan force-marched his caravan by day and night along the coastal route. As for the tribes closely related to the Prophet (sa) the tribes of Hashim and Muttalib, they too had reluctantly joined with the Koraysh. Talib took command of both tribes, whilst Abbas and Hakim, Lady Khadijah's nephew from the tribe of Asad accompanied them. Before leaving Abbas took his wife, Umm Fadl to one-side and told her how he wished his wealth to be distributed in the event of his death and named Abdullah, Kutham, and Ubaydullah as his heirs.

THE FIRST STAGE OF THE PROPHET'S MARCH

The Prophet (sa) decided not to wait for Talha and Sa'id to return, but to press on, and appointed two standard bearers, one from the Ansar and the other from the Muhajir. On 12th Ramadan, with the exception of eight Muslims, who for valid reasons remained in Medina, the Prophet (sa) together with 311 Muhajirs and Ansars set off in search of Abu Sufyan's caravan. The army was ill equipped and provisions less than adequate due to their circumstances but they trusted Allah and His Prophet (sa) so their spirits were high. Between them they had but seventy-two mounts -- seventy camels and two horses -- which they took turns to ride, sometimes they rode two or three at a time. Among those that remained behind was Othman, husband of the Prophet's daughter, Lady Rukiyyah. Lady Rukiyyah had been taken seriously so

compassionately the Prophet (sa) told Othman that he should remain at her side. In his absence he appointed Amru, Ummu Makhtum's son to act as their leader as the hypocrites and Jews could no longer be trusted to remain loyal.

UMAIR, THE SON OF ABI WAKKAS

A mile or so outside Medina, the Prophet (sa) called his army to a halt and discovered that in their anxiousness to support him, several youngsters had joined them. Out of kindness he told them they must return as it was no place for boys so young. Amongst them was a boy named Umair, Abi Wakas's son who cried inconsolably when he was told to return, and so the Prophet (sa) took pity on him and allowed him to accompany them. Umair stopped his crying and a great big smile spread over his face as his elder brother, Sa'ad, hung a sword around his neck.

TWO TRIESMEN FROM JUHAYNAH

The Prophet (sa) gave the order to proceed and so they continued their march southward and then turned towards Badr that lay further down the coast from Hawra. The Prophet's intention was to reach Badr before Abu Sufyan and intercept him there. In the meantime, he sent two of his allies from the Bedouin tribe of Juhaynah, who were familiar with the area, to look for the caravan and bring news whilst he and his small army rested. Just outside Badr lies a water-well at the foot of a hill. Upon reaching the hill, the tribesmen of Juhaynah went down to replenish their water supply and let their camels drink. At the well two girls were talking as they drew water, one girl was overheard saying to the other: "The caravan will arrive either tomorrow or the next day. I will work for them so that I can repay the money I owe to you." It was the news they had been hoping for, so they hastened back to the Prophet's camp to tell him.

ABU SUFYAN AT THE WELL OF BADR

The quickest route to Mecca lay through Badr so Abu Sufyan rode on in advance of the caravan to make sure that it was safe for it to proceed in that direction. He reached the well only a short time after the scouts had left and came across a man from the village who had come to draw water. Abu Sufyan asked if he had seen any strangers recently whereupon the villager told him that the only strangers he had seen were two men who had come over the hill and stopped to draw some water. Abu Sufyan was always on the alert for any signs and furtively glanced around for some camel's dung. He retraced the camel's hoof prints up the hill and found what he was searching for and examined it quickly. As he broke the dung in half his heart started to pound as he saw some date stones and undigested date fiber then cried out: "By Allah, its the food of Yathrib!" His worst fear was confirmed. He knew the Prophet's army could not be far away whereupon he returned with great haste to this caravan camped further up the coast.

THE RETURN OF THE SCOUTS

By now the scouts of Juhaynah had returned to the Prophet (sa) and told him that the caravan's arrival was imminent at Badr. It was good news for they thought themselves to have the upper hand and would be able to overcome them in a surprise attack.

THE RESOLVE OF THE MUHJAIR AND ANSAR

Hopes were high when news arrived that a large army of Koraysh had set out from Mecca to support Abu Sufyan. The Prophet (sa) wasted no time and called the Muhajir and Ansar together to tell them the news. Abu Bakr and Omar represented the Muhajir and Omar acted as their spokesman. Omar told the Prophet (sa) that they were of one voice -- they should advance. Then, one of the latest migrants, Mikdad, from the tribe of Zuhra got up and spoke saying, "O Messenger of Allah, do what Allah has directed. We will not be like the Children of Israel who said to Moses: Go with your Lord and fight, we shall wait here. Rather, we say, 'Go with your Lord and fight, we will fight with you to the right and to the left, in front and behind!'" When the Prophet (sa) heard these faithful words, his face shone knowing well the strength of the Muhajir's faith. Then, Sa'ad. Mu'adh's son of the Ansar stood up and said, "O Messenger of Allah, we believe you and we believe what you have brought us. We bear witness that what you have brought is the truth. We have given you our oath to hear and obey. Do whatsoever you wish, we are with you. By Him who sent you with the truth, if you ask us to cross the sea and plunged yourself into it, we would do the same -- no man amongst us would not do so. We are not against meeting our enemy tomorrow, we have fought before and are to relied upon. Allah willing, our courage will bring coolness to your eyes, so lead us with the blessing of Allah!" There was great rejoicing, the Ansars and Muhajirs were united in their resolve, yet only a matter of a few years prior to this, such unification would have been absolutely unthinkable. The Prophet (sa) was greatly pleased by their united response and told them to be of good heart, because Allah, the Most High had promised him success over one of the two parties, and that even as he spoke it was as if he could see their enemy lying prostrate. The Prophet (sa) together with his small army of companions marched on toward Badr. Less than a day's march away, the Prophet (sa) called for a halt and he and Abu Bakr rode on for a while until they came across an elderly Bedouin. Abu Bakr asked the Bedouin if he had any news, but the Bedouin was cunning and asked to which party they belonged; that of Muhammad, or that of the Koraysh. Abu Bakr told the man that if he told him the whereabouts of each party he would tell him where they were from. The old Bedouin knew well the paths of the desert and told him that in his opinion as Muhammad's party had left Yathrib on 12th Ramadan, they should by now have reached such and such a place -- his estimation was correct -- and that the Koraysh should be very near the place in which they were standing. Then the man asked Abu Bakr where he and his companion were from, Abu Bakr could not afford to trust this wily old Bedouin, so he replied with a clever conundrum saying that they were from "Ma", which is Arabic for water, as man is created from water. The Bedouin was satisfied with his answer and supposed he referred to Iraq on account of its two rivers. Prophet Muhammad (sa) and Abu Bakr returned to their camp and when night fell, the

Prophet (sa) sent for Ali, Zubair, and Sa'ad together with their companions and told them to go to the well and see if anyone there had news of their enemies, or if they had drawn water from the well.

THE FIRST PRISONERS

When they reached the well, they found two men from the Koraysh filling their containers with water and loading them onto the backs of their camels. One of the men was a slave belonging to the children of Al Hajjaj, the other was Arid Abu Yasar, from the children of Al-As. Stealthily, Ali, Zubair, Sa'ad and the others overcame them and took them back to the Prophet (sa) as prisoners. When they reached the camp, the Prophet (sa) was occupied in his prayer so a crowd gathered around the prisoners and started questioning them. The prisoners told them that they were only Koraysh water-men, whereupon their inquisitors started to beat them hoping that they had lied and were from the caravan. It became clear to the water-men that their captors wanted to hear them say that they were Abu Sufyan's men so the retracted their first claim and told them what they wanted to hear. After the Prophet (sa) concluded his prayer, he came out and told his companions that they should not have treated their prisoners in that way, and informed them that their prisoners were indeed from the Koraysh and not from Abu Sufyan. When the Prophet (sa) asked them where the Koraysh were camped they told him, without coercion, pointing to the hill of Akankal, that their camp lay on its slopes on the other side. He asked the size of the army, but the men were unable to estimate its number but said there were many. Wisely, the Prophet (sa) then asked how many camels were slaughtered each day to feed them and was told nine or maybe ten. From this the Prophet (sa) was able to deduce their numbers must be within the range of nine-hundred to a thousand. Then he asked the prisoners for the names of their leaders and learned that the brothers Utba and Shayba were amongst them together with Abu Jahl, Abu'l Bakhtari, Hakim, Nawfal, Al Harith, son of Amir, Tu'mauma, Al Nadr, Zama'a, Ummaya, Nabih, Munabbih, Suhail, and Amr Abu Wudd's son. The Prophet (sa) then turned to his followers and said, "Mecca has thrown to you pieces of its liver!" And from this they understood that they would fight against the chief enemies of Islam.

A FEELING OF SAFETY

After Abu Sufyan had discovered date stones in the camel's dung he decided to take the longer coastal route to Mecca felling confident that he had escaped the attack. He now felt a sense of security and sent word to his fellow chieftains saying, "You came out to save your caravan, your tribesmen and your merchandise, but Allah has delivered us, therefore return." Strange as it may seem, despite all the idols worshipped in Ka'ba, the Koraysh preferred to swear by Allah even though they thought Him to be too remote to worship directly. When Abu Jahl heard these words he rallied his men saying, "By Allah, we will not return until we have been to Badr! We will spend three days there feasting, slaughtering camels, drinking wine and the girls will play for us. When the other Arab tribes hear of us they will from hence forth hold us high in their esteem -- come on!"

TALIB, AL AKHNAS AND THE TRIBE OF ZUHRA

When Al Akhnas, Sharik's son, an ally of the tribe of Zuhra heard Abu Jahl's intent, he said to his allies, "Allah has saved you, your property and your tribesmen, Makhrama, Nawfal's son, your only reason for coming was to protect them, should you be charged with cowardice blame it on me! There is no point going to war with this man without profit as Abu Jahl would have us do!" The tribe of Zuhra heeded Al Akhnas's words and together they returned to Mecca. Talib, the son of Abu Talib, and uncle of the Prophet (sa) had reluctantly ridden out with the Koraysh hating the thought of fighting against his nephew so he had supplicated, "O Allah, it is not my desire to join the Koraysh in their way, but if it should be, let me be plundered and not the plunderer, and be the conquered and not the conqueror." Some of the Koraysh realized what was in Talib's heart and informed him that they knew, so he and some others with similar feelings also returned to Mecca.

THE WELLS OF YALYAL

The Prophet (sa) ordered his followers to break camp and march on to the well near Badr before their enemy had chance to reach it. As they commenced their march rain began to fall and they gave thanks to Allah because it is both a blessing and purification. The sands of Yalyal were always soft, but the rain now made them firm and so the Muslims crossed the valley in comparative ease. The rain helped the Muslims, however, it was a hindrance to the Koraysh army for they had to climb the hill of Akankal that lay to the left of the Prophet (sa) and his companions on the opposite side of the valley of Badr. When the Prophet (sa) reached one of the many wells he called a halt. Hubab, Al Mundhir's son, an Ansar, approached and asked, "O Messenger of Allah, is this the place which Allah has made known to you from which we should neither advance nor retreat, or is it a matter of opinion; a strategy of war?" The Prophet (sa) replied that it was a matter of opinion whereupon Hubab said that in his opinion it was not the best place to establish themselves. He advised the Prophet (sa) that it would be much better to march on to one of the larger wells, closer to the Koraysh, and that once they had situated themselves, to send groups out to locate the remaining wells and plug them so that the Koraysh would be deprived of water. He also advised that a reservoir should be dug to contain water from the well. The Prophet (sa) was grateful for his suggestion and approved the plan, and so when they reached a larger well no time was lost carrying out Hubbub's plan. Sa'ad, Mu'adh's son was concerned for the Prophet's safety so he went to him saying, "O Messenger of Allah, let us erect a shelter for you and keep your camels in readiness next to it. If Allah gives us strength when we meet the enemy we will be victorious, but if it is not written, you can ride and rejoin those we left behind. They love you as much as we do and would never have remained behind if they had known there was going to be an encounter. Allah will protect you, and they will give you good advice and fight at your side." The Prophet (sa) thanked him for his thoughtfulness, praised him and then supplicated for blessings upon him and so a shelter was built from palm branches.

HOURS BEFORE THE ENCOUNTER

It was the night of Friday, 17th of Ramadan and as the three hundred and thirteen believers settled themselves for the night, Allah in His Mercy sent down upon them a blessed, peaceful sleep so that when they awoke to offer their prayer in the morning they felt totally refreshed and prepared for conflict. Meanwhile in the other camp, the Koraysh army with their large, well equipped army stirred and struggled as made their way with their camels to the top of Akankal. By the time the Koraysh reached the top of the hill the sun had already risen and they were visible to the Prophet (sa). Upon seeing the army, the Prophet (sa) supplicated saying, "O Allah, the Koraysh are here. In arrogance and pride they come, opposing You and belieing your Messenger. O Lord, give to us Your help which You have promised. O Lord, destroy them this day." Not long after, the Prophet (sa) chanced to see Utba, Rabia's son, riding a red camel and said to his companions, "If there is any good at all with any one of them, it will be with this man riding the red camel. If they obey him they will take the right path." The Koraysh also had sight of the believers and were surprised to find they were so few and thought perhaps there may be another force concealed somewhere to the rear. When they reached the valley the Koraysh made their camp and sent Umair on horseback to estimate their numbers and see if there were in fact any concealed reinforcements. When Umair returned he proclaimed, "O men of Koraysh, I have seen camels carrying death. These men have no defense or refuge, they have only their swords, but I do not think any man of them will be killed before he has first killed one of us. Even if each party were to kill the other in equal numbers what good will there be left in life after this, what will you do!" Upon hearing Umair, Hakim, from the tribe of Asad, nephew of Lady Khadijah went straight to Utba, the father of Waleed with the men of Abdu Shams. Utba had consented to join the Koraysh against the believers on account of his dead kinsmen, the brother of Amir Al Hadrami, killed at Nakhlah during the Sacred Month. When Hakim found Utba he said. "You are the greatest man, the lord of the Koraysh, and one who is obeyed. Would you like men to remember you with praise for all time?" Utba asked, "How could this be?" "Lead them back, the Koraysh demand nothing more than blood from Muhammad for the blood of your ally, Hadrami,' replied Hakim. Hakim's words appealed to Utba and he agreed whilst encouraging him also to speak with Abu Jahl but he had for many years opposed the Prophet (sa) and was the most anxious among them to wage war against him. Utba spoke to his people saying, "O men of Koraysh, there is nothing to gain fighting Muhammad and his companions. If you defeat them each man among you will always look with despise at another who has killed either his uncle, a cousin or kinsmen. Therefore, turn back and leave Muhammad to the rest of the Arabs. If they kill him you have your desire, on the other hand, if they do not you will have shown self-restraint towards him." When Hakim found Abu Jahl he was oiling his coat of mail and conveyed the message to him. Abu Jahl was infuriated and addressed the army saying, "By Allah, we will not turn back until it is decided between us and Muhammad." Then he called Utba a coward, afraid of death for himself and his son Abu Hudhayfah who was a Muslim. To add fuel to the fire Abu Jahl called upon Amir, the brother of the deceased Amr and challenged him not to let this opportunity to revenge his brother's death slip from him. Emotions ran high and Amir in a state of traditional distress tore his clothes as he screamed at

the top of his voice, "Woe for Amr, woe for Amr," which incited the army still further to fight. Utba's words had fallen on deaf ears, nothing would stop them now. When he heard that Abu Jahl had accused him of cowardice his pride was challenged, so he searched for a helmet to prove him wrong, but was unable to find one large enough, so he wound a piece of cloth around his head to protect him -- the final preparations for the conflict were now underway.

ABDULLAH, SON OF UMMAYA JOINS THE PROPHET (sa)

Abdullah, Ummaya's son, was a Muslim, However, his father, the chief of the tribe of Jummah, torturer of Bilal, had brought pressure to bear upon his son that prevented him from joining the Prophet (sa), and his brothers-in-law, Abu Sabra and Abu Hudhayfah in Medina. Ummaya had forced his son to join him the march, however, the opportunity to escape to the Prophet (sa) was soon to present itself as his father, and every other soldier were busy with their preparations for the hostilities. Unnoticed, Abdullah managed to slip away and made his way to the camp of the Prophet (sa). As soon as he reached it he made straight for the Prophet (sa) and as they greeted each other immense joy spread over both their faces. Sometime later, several other Koraysh tribesmen dared to make their way to the reservoir the believers had made and drink from it. When the believers saw this they drew the matter to the attention of the Prophet (sa) who told them to let them take their fill. With the exception of Hakim, Lady Khadijah's nephew, all who drank its water were killed in conflict that day.

CHAPTER 55 THE ENCOUNTER OF BADR

As the Koraysh began to advance, the Prophet (sa) called upon his companions to form their ranks and spoke to them with words of encouragement, and they knew Allah was with them. Their lines were as straight as arrow with one exception, an Ansar by the name of Sawad, stood slightly more forward than the rest, so the Prophet (sa) went to him and gently prodded his midriff with an arrow. Sawad seized upon the opportunity and said, "O Messenger of Allah, you have hurt me, Allah has sent you with truth and justice, so give me my rights." Upon this, the Prophet (sa) uncovered his midriff and Sawad bent down and kissed it. The Prophet (sa) asked him what had prompted him to do this whereupon Sawad said, "O Messenger of Allah, with matters as they are, and if it is written, it is my wish that my last moments should be spent with you -- that my skin has touched yours." Upon hearing these moving remarks, the Prophet (sa) supplicated to Allah asking for blessings upon Sawad. Not long after, the Prophet (sa) withdrew to his shelter with Abu Bakr and prayed to Allah for help. After his prayer, a short slumber overtook him and upon waking he said to Abu Bakr, "Be well pleased, Allah has sent His help to you. Gabriel is here and in his hand is the rein of a horse which he leads, and he is armed for the conflict!" By now the Koraysh army had drawn nearer and Allah in His Mercy made their numbers appear considerably smaller than they were to the believers; the unbelievers were now only a short distance from the reservoir. Referring to their numbers an the prompts of satan, Allah says in the Koran:

"Indeed, there was a sign for you in the two armies which met on the battlefield. One was fighting in the way of Allah, and another unbelieving. They (the believers) saw with their eyes that they were twice their own number. But Allah strengthens with His victory whom He will. Surely, in that there was a lesson for those possessed of eyes." Koran 3:13

"And when Allah made them appear to you in a vision as a small band, had He showed them to you as many, your courage would have failed you and you would have quarreled over the affair. But Allah saved; He knows the innermost thoughts in the chests. And when you met them, He showed them in your eyes as being few, and decreased (your number) in their eyes so that Allah might determine what was ordained. To Allah all matters return. Believers, when you meet an army stand firm and remember Allah abundantly, in order that you are prosperous. Obey Allah and His Messenger and do not dispute with one another lest you should lose courage and your resolve weaken. Have patience - Allah is with those who are patient. Do not be like those who left their homes elated with insolence and showing off to people, barring others from the Path of Allah - but Allah encompasses what the do. And when satan made their foul deeds seem fair to them, he said: 'No man shall conquer you this day. I shall be your savior.' But when the two armies came within sight of each other he took to his heels saying: 'I reject you, for I can see what you cannot. I fear Allah, Allah is Stern in retribution.'" Koran 8:43-48

Al Aswad, Abdullah Asad's son from the tribe of Makhzum, known for his disagreeable personality, was the first to initiate hostilities as he cried out defiantly, "I will drink from their reservoir, destroy it or else die before reaching it." Hamza, Abdul Muttalib's son challenged him and as the two engaged in combat, Hamza struck him with such force that his foot and shin were severed and flew through the air. Al Aswad was determined to fulfill his word and crawled towards the reservoir, however, Hamza killed him and his body fell into it. Utba, Rabia's son, accompanied by his brother Shayba and his son were the next to challenge and cried out for one-to-one combat. From the Ansar three men stepped forward, they were the brothers Awf and Muawwidh, the sons of Afra and another, probably, Abdullah, the son of Rawaha. Utba asked who they were, and they replied, "We are from the Ansar," whereupon Utba replied, "Our affair is not with you, we know that you are equal to us in lineage but we wish to fight those of similar standing from our own tribe." At that moment, someone from the Koraysh called out: "Muhammad, send out against us our peers from our own tribe!" The Prophet (sa) called upon Ubayda, Harith's son, Hamza and Ali to go forth to meet their enemies and as they approached, the Koraysh asked them to identify themselves. After their identifications had been made known the Koraysh accepted to fight them. Ubayda fought Utba, Hamza fought Shayba, and Ali fought Shayba's son. The fight between Ali and Shayba's son, and Hamza and Shayba was over quickly -- both Ali and Hamza killed the enemies of Allah. Meanwhile Ubayda and Utba had struck each other twice and Ubayda had fallen victim. When Hamza and Ali saw what had befallen their companion they turned upon Utba and he did not live to see the evening. Gently, Hamza and Ali carried Ubayda to the Prophet (sa). His leg had been severed and he had lost a tremendous amount of blood. When he saw the Prophet (sa) he gazed up at him and asked, "O Messenger of Allah, am I to be a martyr?"

"Indeed you are," replied the Prophet (sa) in a soft tone and Ubayda was happy. Then Ubayda said in his weakened voice, "If Abu Talib were alive today he would know that his words: 'We will not give him up until we lie dead around him, forgetting our women and children,' have been fulfilled in me." Three out of the four enemies of Islam that lay dead on the battlefield were killed by Hamza and were related to a high-ranking woman named Hind. Such was Hind's hatred of Hamza that she swore to take her revenge as soon as the opportunity presented itself. Before the armies advanced on each other, the Prophet (sa) ordered his companions not to attack until he gave the word, and told them that in the event they should find themselves surrounded by the enemy they were to keep them at bay by showering their arrows above their heads. He also told them that among the Koraysh were those that had been forced to take up arms against them and if they happened to encounter any of them they must not kill them. Those people were Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, the children of Hashim and Abdul Bakhtari who had supported the Prophet (sa) on several occasions. Meanwhile, the adrenaline coursed quickly through the veins of the Koraysh and in their anxiousness to ignite the conflict two arrows were fired. The first struck Mihja, the freedman of Omar who became the next believer to be martyred, then the second arrow pierced the neck of Haritha, Suraka's son from the tribe of Najjar as he drank from the reservoir.

THE ORDER TO FIGHT

The engagement was about to begin; the Prophet (sa) picked up a handful of small pebbles and said as he looked toward the Koraysh, "May their faces be defaced," then he threw the pebbles toward them and commanded his companions saying, "Now, stand up and proceed towards Paradise. Its extent encompasses the heavens and the earth!" When Umair, Hamam's son, heard this he inquired, "O Messenger of Allah (sa) does Paradise encompass the heavens and the earth?" "Yes," he answered, Umair exclaimed, "Well, well," so the Prophet (sa) asked, "What prompted you to say this". Umair answered: "O Messenger of Allah (sa) by Allah, I uttered these words to express the hope that I might become an inhabitant of Paradise." Whereupon the Messenger of Allah (sa) smiled as he gave him the good news, "You are indeed one of its inhabitants." With happiness in his heart he took some dates from his quiver and began to eat them, then paused saying, "If I were to survive until I finished eating these dates, that would indeed be a long interval." So he threw down the remaining dates, plunged into the conflict, and fought with great courage until he was martyred. The Prophet (sa) heartened his companions saying, "By Allah, in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, there is no man killed this day; fighting against them with unwavering courage advancing and not retreating that Allah will not cause to enter Paradise." The promise of Paradise was the best reward they could ever hope for and the intensity of the engagement accelerated.

THE SWORD OF UKASHAH

As Ukashah, from the tribe of Jahsh, fought valiantly against the unbelievers, his sword broke so he returned to the Prophet (sa) to request another weapon. Instead of a sword, the Prophet (sa) gave him a wooden club. As Ukashah took hold of it, a miracle occurred, the club

was transformed into a strong, long shinning sword and he threw himself once more in the heat of the conflict. From that time onward, Ukashah used the sword in every conflict and called it "Al Awn" which means Divine Help. At some point later on, the Prophet (sa) told his companions that 70,000 people from his nation would enter Paradise like the full moon. Ukashah asked if he could be among them, whereupon the Prophet (sa) supplicated for him. When an Ansar heard this he asked the Prophet (sa) for the same but he was too late and told, "Ukashah has beaten you to it, the prayer has been offered."

THE RECOMPENSE OF ABU JAHL

The Prophet (sa) had ordered his companions to be on the look-out for Abu Jahl. Muawwidh and Awf, the young sons of Afra caught sight of Abu Jahl as he rode his horse. Abu Jahl was strong and no match for a young boy so Afra's sons decided to attack him together and leapt upon him from either side of his horse and severely injured him as his horse ran off. The boys thought he was dead and left him, however, when he regained consciousness he crawled to safety into a nearby thicket. However, his escape had not gone unnoticed and Muadh, Amr's son overheard one of his companions report that Abu Jahl had been seen somewhere in a thicket, however, it was difficult to reach him. Muadh was not to be deterred and began searching for him. Shortly afterwards he found him and they engaged each other in fierce combat until Muadh struck him with such force that Abu Jahl's foot and shin were sliced off and literally flew through the air. When Ikrima, Abu Jahl's son, saw what had happened he turned upon Muadh and yielded him such a blow that his arm was virtually severed and hung on dangling by a piece of flesh. Muadh continued to fight with his other hand until the pain became too great for him to bear, so he knelt down, severed his arm completely then courageously continued to fight as best he could. Muadh was to survive the hostilities of that day and died during the caliphate of Othman. Sometime later, Muawwidh, Afra's son discovered Abu Jahl lying in the thicket and realized he was still alive. They engaged each other in combat during which both sustain severe injuries. At last, Muawwidh was able to inflict a tremendous blow to Abu Jahl and he fell unconsciousness to the ground. Muawwidh, whose hand had been severed, left Abu Jahl for dead, however, Abu Jahl still hung on to life. Muawwidh carried his severed hand to the Prophet (sa), who, by the Mercy of Allah replaced it and blew his saliva upon it. Immediately the hand was restored to its former position. Muawwidh returned to the hostilities, and continued to fight with all his might and was among those martyred that day at Badr. Later on during the day, after the cessation of hostilities, the Prophet (sa) ordered his companions to search for the body of Abu Jahl, telling them that they would be able to identify him by a scar just above his knee. Abdullah, Massaud's son found him in the throes of death and put his foot upon his neck and said, "Allah has put you to shame, you are the enemy of Allah!" Arrogant to the end, Abu Jahl replied, "How has He shamed me, am I anything other than a man you are about to kill?" How did the fighting go?" whereupon Abdullah informed him that it had been in favor of Allah and His Messenger (sa) then cut off his head.

MIRACLES DURING THE ENCOUNTER

Throughout the hostilities continuous winds had blown against the unbelievers. Allah had answered the supplication of His Prophet (sa) and his companions were not left alone to fight the hostilities by themselves:

"And when you (Prophet Muhammad) prayed to your Lord for help, He answered: 'I am sending to your aid a thousand angels in succession.'" Koran 8:9

Directly after the hostilities the Prophet (sa) received another Revelation that informed:

"It was not you who killed them, but Allah slew them, neither was it you who threw at them. Allah threw at them in order that He confers on the believers a fair benefit. Indeed, Allah is Hearing, Knowing." Koran 8:17

Miraculous events occurred continually throughout the encounter. Many were the times, when the believers in pursuit of their enemy, found the heads of the unbelievers would fly off before they had chance to strike them. After the hostilities were over, during the search for their martyred companions, they noticed burn marks upon the necks of the dead unbelievers and drew the matter to the attention of the Prophet (sa). Prophet Muhammad (sa) told them that they were the marks left by the swords of the angels. Some of the companions were blessed to witness the angels fighting alongside them and reported that the hooves of their horses never touched the ground. Later, the Prophet (sa) spoke of the winds saying that the first had been brought by the Angel Gabriel, together with a thousand angels. The second by the Angel Mikhail, with a thousand angels on his right flank. The third by the Angel Israfil with a thousand angels on his left flank, and that the angels had fought alongside the believers wearing turbans with a piece of cloth hanging down at the back; as for their mounts, they were piebald horses. Amongst the many healing miracles that day was that of Khubayb, Yasaf's son. Khubayb's neck had been all but sliced in half and hung limply. When he came before the Prophet (sa) the Prophet gently repositioned the injured part, blew upon it with his saliva and his neck was immediately restored.

THE CLOUD OF ANGELS

A non-combatant from the tribe of Ghifar later told ibn Abbas that during the encounter he and his cousin had positioned themselves at the top of a hill overlooking the battlefield with the intention of looting once the hostilities were over. While they were waiting, a white cloud approached the hill, and in it they heard the whinnying of horses and a voice that struck terror into them saying, "Onward, Hayzum!" The man's cousin was terrified, it was too much for him and his head burst open and he died. The narrator himself told ibn Abbas that he too had almost died from absolute terror.

THE MARTYRS

Fourteen believers were martyred that day. Six were from the Muhajir and eight from the Ansar. Among their ranks were Umair, the young brother of Sa′ad who had pleaded with the Prophet (sa) to let him accompany them. When the time came to bury the martyrs the Prophet (sa) caringly informed his companions that their bodies should not be washed, as on the Day of Judgement their wounds will exude with the fragrance of musk, and so it was that they were laid to rest.

THE LOSSES OF THE UNBELIEVERS

As for the Koraysh, their loss was many times greater than the Muslims. Seventy unbelievers were killed many of whom were the chieftains of the Koraysh, and a further seventy taken captive for whom their tribesmen were to pay ransoms of between three or four thousand dirhams each. However, Prophet Muhammad (sa), was always merciful and set the standard of excellence by freeing many captives whose families were unable to pay the ransom.

CHAPTER 56 THE REVENGE OF BILAL AND THE PERSECUTED

Amongst those taken prisoner was Ummaya, the notorious persecutor of impoverished, under privileged Muslims. Before Islam his captor, Abdu Amr, who had now taken the name Abdul Rahman, had been Ummaya's friend, however, Ummaya refused to recognize him by his new name, instead he would call him Abdulillah, which was acceptable to Abdul Rahman. After the encounter, as Abdul Rahman searched among the dead for coats of mail as spoils of war, he caught sight of Ummaya holding his son Ali's hand and heard him call out "Abdu Amr', but he ignored him until he addressed him as Abdulillah saying, "Won't you take me prisoner, I am more valuable than those coats of mail!" Abdul Rahman answered, "By Allah, I will!" as he threw down the coats of mail. Abdul Rahman took them both by the hand and led them toward the camp. As they walked, Ummaya asked the name of the person that had worn an ostrich feather on his chest. Abdul Rahman told him that the man was Hamza, whereupon Ummaya commented that it was he who had harmed them most. Bilal, who had been tortured unmercifully by Ummaya caught sight of Abdul Rahman leading his prisoners to the camp and cried out, "It is the great unbelievers, Ummaya, Khalaf's son, may I not live as long as he lives!" Abdul Rahman retorted, "They are my prisoners!" but Bilal continued to cry out, "O helpers of Allah, the great unbeliever Ummaya, Khalaf's son, may I not live as long as he lives!" The believers soon began to gather around Abdul Rahman, Ummaya and Ali, then one stepped forward and cut off Ali's foot and Ummaya screamed out in protest with all his might. Abdul Rahman told him that there was nothing he could do for him and the crowd set upon the two and killed them.

THE DRIED-UP WELL

When it came time to bury the twenty-four unbelieving Koraysh chieftains, the Prophet (sa)

ordered their corpses to be cast into a disused, dried-up well. A few days after as the Prophet (sa) left Badr he passed by the well and addressed each of the corpses by their own name saying, "Would it have pleased you if you had obeyed Allah and His Messenger? We have found what our Lord has promised to be true, have you found what your lord has promised you to be true?" When Omar heard him speaking to the dead he asked, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), do you speak to bodies without souls?" whereupon he informed him that they could indeed hear him better than Omar had heard him ask. As for Ummaya, he was not buried with his comrades as his body had swollen to such an extent that when they tried to remove his armor it started to disintegrate, so they covered him with earth and stones, leaving him where he had fallen.

THE BURIAL OF UTBA

As the body of Utba was about to be thrown into the pit along with the other unbelievers, the Prophet (sa) caught sight of Abu Hudhayfah who was Utaba's son. Compassionately, the Prophet (sa) inquired about his feelings, whereupon he replied, "No, I have no misgivings about my father and his death, rather, I remember him for his wisdom, and better qualities. I had hoped that he would be guided to Islam and when I saw he had died in disbelief it saddened me." The Messenger of Allah (sa) spoke kindly to him and then supplicated for Abu Hudhayfah.

THE APOSTATES

Amongst those who had fought against the Prophet (sa) were Harith, Zamaa's son; Abu Kays, Fakih's son, Al Walid's son; Ali, Ummaya's son and Al As, Munabbih's son. All of these men had embraced Islam when the Prophet (sa) was in Mecca, however, when it was time for them to migrate their families had compelled them to stay behind and succeeded to seduce them once more into disbelief. Then, more recently, when the Koraysh asked them to join with them against the Prophet (sa) they had done so without the least hesitation. Now a verse referring to them was sent down.

"And the angels who take those who wronged themselves, will say: ‵In what condition were you?′ They will reply: 'We were oppressed in the land,' They (the angels) will say: 'Was not the earth of Allah wide enough for you in order that you migrate in it?" Those, their shelter will be Gehenna (Hell), an evil arrival." Koran 4:97

CHAPTER 57 THE SPOILS OF WAR

Satan, the stoned and cursed, threw the seeds of discord among the Muslims who had but a few hours before fought as one against a common enemy -- now a dispute over the distribution of the spoils of war started to fester. Some of the Muslims who had stood guard around the Prophet (sa) during the hostilities claimed that although they had not fought, they

were entitled to a share of the prisoners, weapons, coats of mail and rides. When the Messenger of Allah (sa) heard the arguing he immediately ordered all the spoils to be brought before him and it was during this time that a new Revelation was sent down that called them back to the remembrance of Allah, whereupon they felt ashamed of their actions.

"They ask you about the spoils (of war), Say: 'The spoils belong to Allah and the Messenger. Therefore, have fear of Allah, and set things right between you. Obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers.′ Indeed the believers are those whose hearts quake at the mention of Allah, and when His verses are recited to them it increased them in faith. They are those who put their trust in their Lord. Those who pray steadfastly, and spend of that which We have provided them, Those are, in truth, the believers. They shall have degrees with their Lord and forgiveness, and a generous provision.″ Koran 8:1-4

After the Prophet (sa) received the new Revelation he appointed Abdullah, Ka'bs son, to take charge of the spoils. It was now time to set off on the return journey to Medina and so the companions, together with their prisoners made ready, but before they set off the Prophet (sa), knowing that his followers that had remained behind in Medina would be anxious for news of them, sent Abdullah, Rawaha's son on ahead of them to Medina, and Zayd to its suburbs to convey the news of their blessed victory.

THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

Before Islam, when feuding Arabs were taken captive, they knew they could expect little or no mercy from their captors. When the unbelievers learned that the Prophet (sa) had given instructions that they should be bound but treated well they were surprised and heartened still further upon learning that they were not to go hungry but to share their captors food. Amongst the prisoners were several members of the Prophet's own family including Suhail, the chief of Amir, cousin and former brother-in-law of Lady Swaydah, the Prophet's wife. Other family members were the Prophet's uncle, Abbas, who inclined to Islam, but feared that if the Koraysh learned about his inclination they would refuse to repay the vast sums of money owed to him. Then, there was Abd Al As, husband of the Prophet's daughter, Lady Zaynab, with two of his cousins, Nawfal and Akil, who were also nephews of Abbas. Earlier on that day Musab discovered that his brother Abu Aziz had been taken captive by one of the Ansar. When he saw him, he turned to the Ansar saying, "Bind him well, his mother is rich and she might be prepared to pay handsomely for him!" When Abu Aziz heard his brother's remark he exclaimed, "Brother, is this how you speak of me to others?" Musab replied, "He is my brother in your stead." Musab proved to be right, his mother offered 4,000 dirhams for her son's release. However, Abu Aziz never forgot how well the Ansar treated him and would often speak of it in the years to come. That night as the companions prepared themselves to sleep the Prophet (sa) was restless. He disliked the thought of his uncle being bound so he sent word for him to be untied.

NADR AND UKBA

Amongst their captives, the companions succeeded in taking two of their most hostile enemies -- Nadr, from the tribe of Ad Dharr and Ukba, from the tribe of Shams. The Prophet (sa) contemplated on whether or not to let them live, for he knew that if they were to remain alive they would, no doubt, continued to incite further hostilities against them. However, there was the chance that the events of the encounter had caused them to reflect and thereby convert to Islam. With this in mind, the Prophet (sa) patiently decided to observe their attitude and actions before taking any further steps. By the time they had reached their first halt, the Prophet (sa) had chance to assess Nadr and Ukba and found them both as resolute as they had always been, nothing had changed, so he ordered Ali to put Nadr to death and an Ansar to put Ukba to death. Three days before reaching Medina, the Prophet (sa) halted his army and divided the prisoners and spoils of war between them so that each companion received an equal share.

REACTIONS IN MEDINA

When Zayd and Abdullah reached Medina, the news of the Prophet's victory spread like wild-fire throughout the City, whereupon the Muslims rejoiced and gave thanks to Allah. Zayd now made his way to Afra's house to break the news that her two sons Awf and Muawwidh had both been martyred at Badr. It was indeed a great loss for Afra, but deep down she knew that her sons had been honored with the death of martyrdom. From Afra's house Zayd visited Haritha's mother and told her that her son had been one of the first to be mortally wounded at the onset of the hostilities. A few days after the Prophet's return Haritha's mother went to him and asked, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), tell me about Haritha. If he is in Paradise I can endure it with patience, but if not I shall weep." The Messenger of Allah (sa) compassionately consoled her with the words, "O mother of Haritha, there are many ranks in Paradise and your son has achieved the best -- Firdous!" The heart of Haritha's mother was now at rest, and she gave thanks to Allah, she could not have wished for more than this for her beloved son. As for the hypocrites, and Jewish tribes of Nadir, Krayzah and Kaynuka their hopes were dashed. All had all hoped for the destruction of the Prophet (sa) and his followers so that their way of life might return to how it had been before his arrival in Medina.

KA'B, THE SON OF ASHRAF

Such was the disregard for their faith, that many Jews had taken to marrying pagan Arabs, even though Judaism forbade it. Ka'b, Ashraf's son had been born of a Jewish mother and an idol worshipping Arab from the tribe of Tayy but on account of his mother being a Jewess, the Jews accepted him as one of their own into her tribe of Nadir. Ka'b was wealthy and known for his poetry, and over the years had become an influential Nadir tribesman. When he heard the news of the Koraysh defeat, with the demise of so many if its chieftains, he could not accept it and his tongue revealed his innermost thoughts as he exclaimed, "By Allah, if

Muhammad has killed these, can the depths of the earth be better than its surface!" Ka'b could not accept the news to be true so he questioned those whom he knew to be reliable, but to his dismay all confirmed the same account. Despondent, yet angered Ka'b rode off for Mecca with the intention of inciting the Koraysh to revenge themselves by riding against the Prophet (sa) again, but, this time to fight him in Yathrib. To add fuel to the fire he composed an impassioned poem in honor of the lamented Koraysh chieftains and their fallen tribes which he knew would kindle the emotions of everyone in Mecca.

CHAPTER 58 THE DEATH OF LADY RUKAYYAH

Although it was a time for great elation in Medina, it was also a time for great sorrow. Shortly before the Prophet (sa) left for Badr, his daughter, Lady Rukayyah, had been taken seriously ill. Her illness has been of such great concern to the Prophet (sa) that he had instructed her husband, Uthman, to stay at her side and not to accompany them to Badr. Lady Rukayyah's illness proved terminal and on the very day Zayd and Abdullah brought news of the glorious victory, Uthman and Osama buried her, may Allah be pleased with her. One of the first things the Prophet (sa) did upon his return was to visit her grave. Lady Fatima, the youngest daughter of the Prophet (sa) was very upset by the loss of her sister and so the Prophet (sa) took her to visit the tomb. As they approached the grave Lady Fatima could not withhold her sorrow and many tears rolled down her cheek whereupon the Prophet (sa) comforted her and dried away her tears with his cloak. There had been a misunderstanding over the Prophet's instruction regarding the extent of expressing one's bereavement. Omar had heard someone weeping for the martyred of Badr and then again for Lady Rukayyah and spoken harshly to them. When the Prophet (sa) learned of Omar's harsh words, he told him it was all right to let them weep, for what comes from the heart and from the eyes is from Allah and His Mercy. He explained that it was only the excess of the hand and tongue which was forbidden because they are the prompts of satan, the stone and cursed. By this he referred to the pagan customer where mourners would beat their chest, dig their nails into their cheeks and scream in an uncontrollable manner.

CHAPTER 59 THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRISONERS

The Koraysh prisoners arrived in Medina the day after Prophet Muhammad (sa). They had been well cared for and the attitude of the Muslims towards them gave the Koraysh a chance to experience Islam in action. Not only had they been treated unexpectedly well but they could not help but observe the considerate Islamic behavior of Muslims toward one another that had succeeded in breaking down, what would have appeared to other Arabs, as impregnable tribal differences and barriers.

THE RANSOM OF SUHAYL

Suhayl, Lady Swaydah's cousin and former brother-in-law was confined in the house of the

Prophet (sa) as was Al As, the husband of Lady Zaynab, the Prophet's daughter. When Suhayl arrived, Lady Swaydah was not at home, she had been to visit Afra whose sons had been martyred, so upon her return she was taken by surprise to find him sitting in the corner of a room in her apartment with his hands bound. When Suhayl's tribesmen learned of his capture they made haste to Medina to negotiate his release, as he was considered by many, to be the most able to lead the tribe of Amir. Suhayl was Malik, the son of Al Dukhshum's captive, and so it was with him that the ransom was negotiated. The amount was agreed upon, however, Suhayl's tribesmen had not brought the ransom with them so he permitted Suhayl to return with them to raise the sum and left Mikraz, Haf's son behind as surety until their return.

THE RANSOM OF ABBAS

Abbas was a well-built man yet he had been taken captive by Abu'l Yassar who was of slight build. When the Prophet (sa) asked how he managed to capture him, Abdu'l Yassar told him that a man, the like of which he had neither seen before or after, had helped him, whereupon the Prophet (sa) informed him that the man was none other than an angel sent for that purpose. When Abbas was brought before the Prophet (sa) he was asked, "You are a rich man, why don't you ransom yourself Abbas, and your nephews, Akil and Nawfal was well as Utba, Amr's son?" Abbas replied, "My tribesmen coerced me into joining them." The Prophet (sa) answered, "Allah knows best, however, it would appear you have acted against us, therefore a ransom is due." As part of the spoils of war Abbas had been relieved of twenty pieces of gold, so he reminded the Prophet (sa) of them telling him to use that as his ransom. When the Prophet (sa) heard this he replied, "Allah has taken this away from you and given it to us." Abbas insisted, "I have no money!" whereupon the Prophet (sa) asked, "Where then is the money you left with Umm Fadl, Harith's daughter when you left Mecca?" Abbas was completely taken aback and exclaimed, "None except Umm Fadl knew of this -- now I know you have been sent with the truth!" whereupon Abbas ransomed himself, his nephews and Utba.

CHAPTER 60 THE RETURN OF THE KORAYSH

The first people to reach Mecca with the news of the Koraysh defeat were Al Haysuman and Abdullah, Al Khuzai's son, who bewailed the fact that so many of their chieftains had fallen on the battlefield of Badr. In the large tent of Zamzam, the converts Abu Rafi, former slave of Abbas freed by the Prophet (sa) and Abbas' wife, Umm Fadl sat sharpening their arrows. They had both been overjoyed to hear the news of the Prophet's victory, however, they felt it was more prudent to restrain their happiness. As they sharpened the arrows, Abu Lahab who had not taken part in the encounter but sent Al As in his place entered. His face looked as black as thunder as he sat himself down at the other end of the tent with his back toward Abu Rafi. Not long after Abu Lahab heard some others in the tent saying, "Abu Sufyan, Al Harith's son has returned," whereupon he looked up, saw his nephew and called him. A small crowd gathered around the two as Abu Sufyan told his uncle, "The facts are the Koraysh met our

enemy and turned their backs. They put us to flight taking prisoners as they pleased, I cannot blame our tribesmen because they faced not only them but men wearing white robes riding piebald horses, who were between heaven and earth. They spared nothing and no one had a chance." When Umm Fadl and Abu Rafi heard the news of the men in white riding between heaven and earth, they could no longer contain their happiness and Abu Rafi exclaimed for all to hear, "They were angels!"

THE DEATH OF ABU LAHAB

Abu Rafi's outburst was more than Abu Lahab could bear, in a raging fury he forced Abu Rafi, who was frail, to the ground and struck him over and over again. Umm Fadl grabbed hold of a tent pole that lay nearby and with all her might hit her brother-in-law's head with it crying out. "Do you think that you can abuse him just because Abbas is away!" She wounded him so severely that his head was split open and laid bare part of his skull. The wound was never to heal, it turned septic and its poison spread rapidly through his entire body erupting into open pustules that caused his death within the week. When he died, his family, fearing that they might be afflicted with disease -- for they feared the plague, and his condition resembled it -- were hesitant to bury him and so they left his decaying body decomposing in his home for two or three nights. It was only when someone rebuked them strongly saying, "It is disgraceful, you should be ashamed of yourselves to leave your father to rot in his house and not bury him from the sight of men!" that they did something. With great reluctance and from a safe distance, his sons threw water over his body, then removed his corpse and left it by a wall on a high piece of ground outside Mecca and threw stones over it until it was completely covered.

CHAPTER 61 THREE RESOLUTIONS

As the fragmented Koraysh army returned home, the extent of their unexpected, devastating loss be came apparent to the Koraysh. Each day the Koraysh waited anxiously for their kinsmen to return or learn from others whether they knew if their kinsmen were alive, dead or taken captive. It was feared, by the remaining Koraysh hierarchy, that the Prophet (sa) would soon learn that the people of Mecca were deeply affected by their defeat and grief-stricken, so a meeting was convened in the House of Assembly. It was proposed that none should make an open issue of their grief and in an effort to make the matter appear light, the council of chieftains agreed that the Koraysh must delay sending the ransom money to free their kinsmen. As a matter of bravado in support of this resolution, Amr's father shouted out, "Must I loose twice! They have killed Hanzalah, now I must pay for the ransom of Amr! Let him stay with them, they can keep him as long as they wish!" During the meeting it was also agreed that the profit from the sale of the caravan's merchandise would be spent upon rebuilding their army. The consensus was that it should be larger, better equipped and more powerful than ever before and from now on their women folk should accompany into battle and encourage them. It was also agreed to send messages to all their allies, throughout the length and breadth of Arabia, explaining, why, in their opinion, they should unite with them against

the Prophet (sa).

THE BREAKING OF THE RESOLUTION

For the majority of Koraysh tribesmen, the matter to delay sending the ransom for their loved ones proved too difficult, so they broke the resolution and sent fellow tribesmen to Medina to secure their release.

JUBAIR, SON OF MUTIM

Jubair, Mutim's son had been sent to Medina to ransom his cousin and two tribal allies. Before and after meeting with the Prophet (sa) Jubair had a chance to wander around Medina where he saw the small community of Muslims going about their daily business, sharing and caring for each other in a way he had neither seen nor yet experienced before, there was an air of unity, a sense of tranquility and devotion to Allah and great love for His Messenger everywhere he went. When he met the Prophet (sa) he told him why he had come to Medina whereupon the Prophet (sa) spoke with soft words and told him that if his father had been alive and come to ransom them he would not have accepted it, rather, he would have released them without ransom. As the daylight faded and evening approached, Jubair watched the believers make their way to the Mosque to offer the Maghrib prayer. Jubair felt drawn to the Mosque but did not enter but listened to the prayers from outside. That evening the Prophet (sa) recited the chapter "The Mount" which warns, at it’s beginning, of the Day of Judgement, its consequences, and the punishment of the Fires of Hell for those who belie it. The chapter then expounded the delights of Paradise with its serenity, and rich, unending rewards. Further on in the chapter he heard how Allah challenges mankind with His ability to create and then draws attention to mankind's inability to do so. The recitation concluded with the verses:

"So leave them till they encounter their Day in which they shall be thunderstruck. The Day when their guile shall not relieve them a thing, and they shall not be helped. For the harmdoers there is indeed, a punishment before that, but most of them do not know. And be patient under the Judgement of your Lord, surely, you are before Our Eyes. And exalt with the praise of your Lord when you arise, and exalt Him in the night and at the declining of the stars." Koran 52:45-49

When the Prophet (sa) reached the words: "And be patient under the Judgement of your Lord, surely, you are before Our Eyes. And exalt with the praise of your Lord when you arise, and exalt Him in the night and at the declining of the stars."

Jubair said later that it was then that the light of belief was sown in his heart, however, he put it to one side for the time being, as the grief he felt for his beloved uncle Tuaymah killed by Hamza during Badr consumed him for there was, in his opinion, a matter of honor to be settled. He felt obliged to engage Hamza in mortal combat for his uncle's death, and so he

distanced himself from his inclination and returned to Mecca with his cousin and the two allies.

THE RANSOM OF WALID

Waleed, the chieftain of the Makhzum had been killed on the battlefield and his youngest son, also by the same name, had been taken captive and given to Abdullah, Jahsh's son and some of the other companions for ransom. Waleed had two other brothers, one full blood and the other half, both of whom had made their journey to Medina to pay for his release. When his half brother, Khalid, learned that Abdullah would accept no less than four thousand dirhams, he was unwilling to pay such a large amount. Hisham, his full blood brother, rebuked him saying, "Indeed, he is not your mother's son!" whereupon Khalid felt ashamed and agreed to pay the amount. However, before the final agreement was reached, Prophet Muhammad (sa) advised Abdullah that he should also ask for their deceased father's coat of armor and weapons. When Khalid learned of this he expressed yet again his reluctance to part with his father's possessions, but Hisham managed to convince him to part with them and so the armor and weapons were brought from Mecca so they could not longer be used against the Muslims. The ransom was now paid in full and the three brothers left for Mecca. They had traveled for quite a while when they felt the need to rest. As the brothers took their rest, Waleed slipped away and returned to Medina where he went directly to the Prophet (sa) and embraced Islam. When his brothers awoke, they searched for Waleed then decided to follow his tracks which led them back to Medina. Upon reaching the City they searched for their brother and upon finding him, Khalid, who was extremely angry, demanded to know why he had let them pay the ransom and surrender their father's armor when all the time he intended to convert to Islam and stay with the Prophet (sa) in Medina. Waleed's answer was direct, he told them that he had no wish for people to think that he had converted in order not to pay the ransom; it was a matter of honor. Unwisely, Waleed decided to return to Mecca with his brothers in order to bring his belongings to Medina. As soon as he arrived home he was imprisoned and placed under heavy guard by Ikrima, Abu Jahl's son, whose uncles Ayyah and Salamah had embraced Islam. When the Prophet (sa) learned of Waleed's pitiful condition he included him in his supplications along with the other Muslims who were unfortunate enough to be incarcerated in Mecca.

UMAIR AND HIS SON

The hearts of Ubay from the tribe of Jumah, his nephews Safwan and Umair, as well as many others, had not softened toward the Prophet (sa) and his Message. Ubay had lost his brother Ummaya as well as his close friend Ukba during the hostilities. This grief, coupled with the humiliation of loosing the encounter in which their numbers far exceeded those of the Prophet (sa) only accentuated their hatred and bitterness. Umair felt further humiliated as he was already heavily in debt and now that his son had been taken captive he expected to have to pay a ransom. Umair's very being was consumed with resentment and bitterness to the extent that he was prepared to die attempting to kill the Prophet (sa), however, the matter of his debt restrained him as he did not wish to leave his family destitute. Safwan, the next-in-

succession to the tribe of Jumah since the killing of his father, spoke in secrecy to Umair. He told him that, if as he had said, the only thing holding him back from riding out to kill the Prophet (sa) was the fact that he did not want to leave his family destitute, he would bear the debt for him, and in the event that anything should happen to him, he would look after his family. Umair was agreeable and both Safwan and Umair swore never to disclose their arrangement to anyone until after the event. Umair returned home to prepare himself for the journey and as he sharpened his sword, he smeared its blade with poison and carefully placed it in its sheath then told his family he was going to Medina to ransom his son. When he reached Medina, he found the Prophet (sa) sitting in the Mosque. Omar immediately suspected Umair's intentions when he saw him wearing his sword and told some of the Ansar, who were nearby, to go and sit close to the Prophet (sa) and to be on their guard as he felt Umair was their enemy; a person not to be trusted. Umair concealed his intention under the guise of politeness and greeted the Prophet (sa) in the way Arabs usually greeted one another. The Prophet (sa) responded saying, "Allah has given us a better greeting than this Umair, it is 'peace' which is the greeting of the people of Paradise." Then the Prophet (sa) inquired about the nature of his visit so Umair told him that he had come on account of his son, so the Prophet (sa) asked why he wore a sword. Unexpectedly, Umair cursed the sword, exclaiming, "Have they done us any good!" The Prophet (sa) spoke gently to him, asking, "Tell me the truth Umair, why have you come?" Umair repeated his reason, then much to his astonishment, the Prophet (sa) informed him verbatim of the conversation he and Safwan exchanged in Mecca. Umair cried out, "Who has told you this, by Allah there were only two of us present -- no one else!" whereupon the Prophet (sa) told him that Gabriel had informed him of their conversation. Umair was in awe of the Prophet (sa) and said, "We called you a liar when you brought us news of Paradise, praise be to Allah who has guided me to Islam. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger." It was a time for thanksgiving and the Prophet (sa) asked his companions to teach their new brother in Islam and to free his son. The light of guidance had certainly shed itself upon Umair. Sometime after, when he was more knowledgeable of Islam, he asked the Prophet (sa) for his permission to return to Mecca so that he might tell his family and friends. And so it was that Umair was blessed to guide many of his tribe to Islam, however, his one-time best friend, Safwan, refused to have anything to do with him and viewed him as a traitor. Such was the love of Umair for the Prophet (sa) that he could not bear to be away from him for long and so several months after his return to Mecca he and his family migrated to Medina.

AL AS, HUSBAND OF LADY ZAYNAB

Lady Zaynab had married Al As before the Prophet (sa) had been given the command to preach and as a wedding gift, her mother, Lady Khadijah gave her daughter a most beautiful necklace, her favorite necklace, one which she often wore. Much to Lady Zaynab’s dismay Al As had not been among the early converts to Islam and their relationship had not been as close as it had once been. When the Prophet (sa) migrated to Medina, Al As refused to allow her to migrate with her sisters and this had caused her to grieve. Then in more recent days, their relationship had become even more strained when Al As sided with his fellow tribesmen

to fight against her beloved father, and now Al As found himself a captive in Medina. When Lady Zaynab learned of her husband's capture she sent the necklace as part of the ransom to secure his release. However, when the Prophet (sa) caught sight of the necklace, he immediately recognized it as having once belonged to his dearly beloved wife Khadijah and tears of loving remembrance swelled up and flowed from his eyes then gently ran down his noble face as he softly said to his companions, "If you would like to let her have her captive husband and return the ransom you may do so." The companions realized the significance of the necklace and were overcome with emotion whereupon the necklace, together with the ransom were returned to Al As and he was free to return to Mecca. When Al As returned to Mecca, he told Lady Zaynab that she and their young daughter were free to join her father. Lady Zaynab was delighted and started to make preparations for the journey. One day Hind, Utba's daughter happened to see her packing and asked whether she was leaving for Medina. Lady Zaynab was unsure whether to trust Hind so she replied with an evasive answer even though Hind offered to give her money as well as provisions for the journey. A month had now passed since the encounter, and so the Prophet (sa) asked Zayd, Haritha's son and a companion to journey to the valley of Yajaj, which lies eight miles out of Mecca, and wait for her there then accompany them onto Medina. The time to leave had arrived, and so her brother-in-law, Kinanah, brought her canopied camel for her and little Umama to ride and led the way out of Mecca with his bow in hand. When the Koraysh learned of Lady Zaynab's departure a party of them rode after her and finally caught up with them at a place called Dhu Tuwa. Habbar, Al Aswad's son was the first to approach and threatened her menacingly with his lance as she rode the camel. Kinanah armed his bow and cried out, "By Allah, if any one of you comes near us I will put an arrow through him!" The Koraysh knew Kinanah was in earnest and withdrew. Shortly afterwards Abu Sufyan arrived with several other Koraysh chieftains and asked him to disarm his bow so that they might talk things over and Kinanah agreed. Abu Sufyan rebuked Kinanah for taking Lady Zaynab out of Mecca in broad daylight for all to see and asked why he had done such a thing. "Didn't he know their predicament and might it not be taken as a further sign of humiliation and weakness on their part?" he asked him. Abu Sufyan told him that they did not want to keep her, however, she must return until things died down and then leave discreetly to join her father. And so, Lady Zaynab and Kinanah returned to Mecca and waited until the time was right, then set off once again on their journey to Yajaj where arrangements had once more been made for Zayd and his companion to accompany the holy family on to Medina.

v THE ELDERLY ANSAR AND ABU SUFYAN

In an attempt not to lose face among the Koraysh, Abu Sufyan continued to refuse to send money for his son's ransom. However, during the pilgrimage season of the following year, Abu Sufyan seized and elderly Ansar on his return to Medina from his pilgrimage and sent word that he would not release him until Amr was released. It was not an honorable act to capture one so elderly and without hesitation the Prophet (sa) agreed to the exchange and both were reunited with their families.

CHAPTER 62 THE MARRIAGE OF LADY FATIMA

In the second year after the Migration, now referred to as Hijra 2, during the month of Dhul Hija, which equates approximately to the Christian era 623/624, Lady Fatima, daughter of the Prophet (sa) and Lady Khadijah, was married. Lady Fatima was now eighteen years of age and her father had made mention to his family that he thought Ali, who had been raised with her for many years, but now lived in a very modest house near the mosque, would be the most suitable husband for her. However, the issue had not been settled. Lady Fatima was not without suitors. Abu Bakr and Omar had both offered their hand in marriage but the Prophet (sa) deferred them saying he would wait until Allah clarified the matter. A few weeks after the Encounter at Badr, in which Ali had fought so bravely, the Prophet (sa) suggested that he might like to ask for Lady Fatima's hand in marriage. Ali had been too shy to come forward before now as he was very poor and did not consider himself to be in a position to offer Lady Fatima a worthy dowry and drew the Prophet's attention to it. The Prophet (sa) was touched by Ali's humility and asked referring to a piece of armor he had won at the Encounter of Badr, "What have you done with 'Huttiyah'?" Ali replied that he still owned it, whereupon the Prophet (sa) said it was sufficient for his daughter's dowry. Ali's worldly possessions were indeed meager, all he owned was the piece of armor, a sheep skin and an old piece of Yemeni cloth that he used as a sheet. However, now that he had received encouragement from the Prophet (sa) he asked Lady Fatima for her hand in marriage in the presence of her father. It was customary in those days for brides-to-be not to answer her suitor if she was agreeable to his proposal, so Lady Fatima remained silent and Ali knew that his proposal had been accepted. Up until now, several schools of Islamic jurisprudence consider a prospective bride's shy silence as an indication of acceptance to a proposal.

A HOME FOR THE BLESSED COUPLE

One of the Ansar, Haritha, Numan's son, owned many houses and had already given several of them to the Prophet (sa) who accepted them graciously and then given them to those in need. Lady Fatima knew of Haritha's generosity, and asked her father if it might be possible for him to also give them one. The Prophet (sa) was reluctant to press upon Haritha's generosity, however, when Haritha learned of Lady Fatima's forthcoming marriage he went immediately to the Prophet (sa) saying, "Whatever I have is yours. By Allah, whenever you accept any of my houses, it gives me greater pleasure than if I still owned them." Haritha's generous offer was accepted and Ali with his bride-to-be now had a home awaiting them. As a wedding gift, the Prophet (sa) gave his daughter and Ali a bed woven from Arkanda fiber. A leather mattress stuffed with soft palm leaves, a water-skin, two sets of mill stones with which to grind grain, and two earthenware pitchers. When the day of the marriage arrived, Lady Ayesha and Lady Umm Salama went together to prepare the house for the young couple and soft sand was brought then strewn over the floor. In celebration of the occasion, the Prophet (sa) requested that a ram be sacrificed and prepared in readiness for their guests. Grain, dates, figs and perfumed water were also brought to feed their guests. It was a very happy occasion and one

that was well remembered for a long time afterwards. As the celebration drew to a close the Prophet (sa) arose and left whereupon the guests realized that it was also time for them to leave, but just before he departed he spoke to Ali telling him not to approach Lady Fatima until after he returned. The only person to remain behind was the faithful, long time family maid, Umm Ayman, who had consoled the Prophet (sa) upon the death of his mother nearly fifty years before, and she busied herself with tidying up after the guests had left. When the Prophet (sa) returned, Umm Ayman answered the door and he asked: "Where is my brother?" Umm Ayman was somewhat surprised and inquired, using an expression common to Arabs of that time, "May my father and mother be your ransom! O Messenger of Allah, who is your brother?" Whereupon the Prophet (sa) replied: "Ali, the son of Abu Talib." The reply puzzled Umm Ayman and she asked: "How can he be your brother, when you have just married your daughter to him?" "It is as I said," replied the Prophet (sa) and asked her to bring some water. Upon hearing the Prophet's voice Ali entered the room and sat down in front of him. Umm Ayman returned and gave the water to the Prophet (sa) whereupon he took a mouthful of water then returned it to the vessel. Then he dipped his hand into the vessel and sprinkled some water over Ali's shoulders, chest and arms. Then he called for his daughter and did the same, as he supplicated for blessings upon them both and upon their children.

CHAPTER 63 “WHEN YOU ARE TOUCHED WITH GOOD FORTUNE, THEY GRIEVE”

The Jews of Medina had entered into a binding agreement with the Prophet (sa) and through it were afforded many benefits. However, an integral part of the agreement was that they would neither ally, nor assist the unbelievers against the Prophet (sa). On the surface, with the exception of a few minor taunts, the Jews and the hypocrites appeared to tolerate the Muslims. However, deep-rooted resentment festered and the Jews yearned even more for the return of the old days even though they had been beholden to idolatrous Arabs. When the news of the Prophet's victory over the Koraysh at Badr reached Medina, the Jews, hypocrites and those who remained pagan, were unable to conceal their great disappointment. The most disappointed were those from the Jewish tribes of Kaynuka, domiciled in the City of Medina, together with their cousins from the tribes of Krayzah and Nadir that lived on the outskirts, all had hoped that the Koraysh would rid them of the Prophet (sa) and his followers. It was during this time that Allah sent down the following verse which records and warned the Prophet (sa) and his followers of these hidden feelings:

"Believers, do not take intimates with other than your own. They spare nothing to ruin you, they yearn for you to suffer. Hatred has already shown itself from their mouths, and what their chests conceal is yet greater. Indeed, We have made clear to you the signs, if you understand. There you are loving them, And they do not love you. You believe in the entire Book. When they meet you they say: ‘We believe.’ But when alone, they bite their finger-tips at you out of rage. Say: ‘Die in your rage! Allah has knowledge of what is in your chests.” Koran 3:118-19

Allah also drew the attention of the Prophet (sa) and his followers to the following, saying:

"When you are touched with good fortune, they grieve, but when evil befalls you, they rejoice. If you are patient and cautious, their guile will never harm you. Allah encompasses what they do." Koran 3:120

Allah also sent down verses that permitted the Prophet (sa) to counteract acts of treachery with justice and instructions how his adversaries should be treated if they should incline to peace, saying:

"If you fear treachery from any of your allies, you can dissolve with them equally. Allah does not love the treacherous." Koran 8:58

"If they incline to peace, incline to it also, and put your trust in Allah. Surely, He is the Hearing, the Knowing." Koran 8:61

In the meantime, much to the delight of the Koraysh, they found they had unexpected allies in Medina, for each time a Jewish caravan arrived in Mecca they brought news of the Prophet's movements. And so it was that the Jews began to break the treaty, just as the waves of the sea gently erode a mound of sand upon the shore until none remains.

CHAPTER 64 THE MARKET PLACE OF THE TRIBE OF KAYNUKA

Not long after the Prophet's return from Badr he went to the Jewish market place of the Kaynuka which was also frequented by Muslims. He hoped the widely reported miraculous events of Badr might have touched the hearts of the Jews and caused them to reflect. As he walked through the market place he invited them to Islam and entreated them not to let the anger of Allah come upon them as it had just done upon the Koraysh. However, his invitation fell on deaf ears and someone called out in defiance, "Muhammad, do not be fooled by those circumstances. You fought against men who did not know how to fight; that is why you were able to get the better of them! By Allah, if you make war on us you will soon know that we are a force to reckon with!" The Prophet (sa) did not respond and returned home.

THE INSULT OF THE GOLDSMITH

A few days following the rejection, a Muslim lady made her way to the same market and was insulted in a despicable manner by a goldsmith. An Ansar happened to overhear the insult and came to her assistance. Sharp words were exchanged which ultimately led to blows during which the goldsmith fell and was accidentally killed. Once again the Jews who had agreed that

such matters were to be brought before the Prophet (sa) to be resolved, threw the agreement to the wind, and sent word to their former Arab allies that had not converted from the tribes of Aws and Khazraj to rise up with them against the Prophet (sa).

THE FORTRESSES OF KAYNUKA

Many years before, not far from the market place, the Jews had built fortresses to protect themselves in times of trouble. These fortresses were soon to be come a hive of activity with provisions and arms being delivered by all possible means available. No sooner had the supplies been delivered than the Jews barricaded themselves inside and waited for their allies to arrive. The tribesmen of the Kaynuka numbered twice that of the Muslims who fought at Badr and expected their force to swell still further as soon as their pagan allies learned of their up rise. When news of the Kaynuka's intent reached the Prophet (sa) he gathered his men, surrounded the fortresses and then sent word to them demanding an unconditional surrender. During this time the call to rise up against the Prophet (sa) reached the ears of the unbelieving chieftains of the Khazrajite tribe. Ibn Ubayy, one of its chieftains, was inclined to go their assistance, however, another chieftain, Ubadah, reminded him that the pact they had made with the Jews in years gone by was no longer existent. Ubadah shrewdly observed and drew ibn Ubayy's attention to the fact that the Jews had broken their pact with them in preference to one made with the Prophet (sa) who they now intended to fight. Two weeks passed, and the tribesmen of Kaynuka remained barricaded in their fortresses waiting for their allies to come to their aid. As each day came and went their hopes started to dwindle; they had to face the fact that they would either have to engage the Prophet (sa) and his companions alone or accept the unconditional terms of surrender.

SURRENDER AND EXPULSION

As the Prophet (sa) waited for the Kaynuka's answer, ibn Ubayy sought him out in a belligerent manner. When he found him he demanded, "Muhammad, treat my allies well!" The Prophet (sa) declined to comment and turned away from him, whereupon ibn Ubayy seized him by the neck of his coat of mail. The expression of the Prophet's face changed and he asked him to release his hold. Ibn Ubayy swore that he would never do so until he received a promise from the Prophet (sa), then he asked whether it was his intent to kill the Jews. Prophet Muhammad (sa) informed him that it had never been his intent, rather, it was to spare their lives, however, he informed him that from now on they were to be banished and their possessions confiscated. He then told ibn Ubayy if he desired to do so he could escort them to wherever they wished to relocate. Ibn Ubayy accepted the Prophet's decision and sent word to his allies informing them of their fate and then escorted them to a Jewish settlement at Wadi Al Kura, which lies some distance away to the north of Medina. As for their confiscated possessions, they were to greatly enrich the Muslim armory, as the Kaynuka were highly skilled smiths and much needed coats of mail, and weapons were among the spoils.

KA'B, THE SON OF ASHRAF

The Jew, Ka'b, Ashraf's son, had not only used his wealth against the Prophet (sa) and more recently composed a poem that served to stir and fuel the emotions of the Koraysh, now wrote another poem as he rode on his cloud of infamy in Mecca. This time however, it was not in praise of the Koraysh, it was a poem written in extremely poor taste that not only degraded Muslim women but insulted them. When the Prophet (sa) heard of Ka'bs disgraceful conduct he ordered that if any Muslim should come across him he should be killed. Ka'b, however, had not returned to Medina, he married and chose to live in a fortress near Wadi Mudhanib to the south of the City near a lava plain. Silkan, Salam's son was the half brother of Ka'b and had converted to Islam, when he learned of the Prophet's order, he, together with Abbad Bishr's son; Al Harith, Aus' son, who were joined by Abu Abs, Jabir's son conspired together to bring about the downfall of Ka'b. The plan they devised was that Silkan should go to the fortress and entice Ka'b to come out while the others concealed themselves a distance away. With this intent, one moonlight night Silkan and his companions made their way to Wadi Mudhanib and just before they reached the fortress Silkan's companions took up their positions whilst he went on alone to the fortress. Upon reaching the fortress Silkan discovered the doors were locked so he called out to his half brother, whereupon Ka'b peered out from behind the fortifications and upon realizing it was his brother went out to meet him. Silkan told him that there were certain matters with which he wished to speak about in private away from the ears of the fortress, and so together they went for a stroll under the moonlit sky. When they reached the place where his companions had concealed themselves, Silkan cried out, "Kill the enemy of Allah!" The companions leapt upon Ka'b and accomplished their mission and so Ka'b never lived to write another poem. During the attack, Al Harith was wounded and lost a lot of blood, however, when they reached Medina they went straight to the Prophet (sa) to tell him of their success. Upon seeing Al Harith's wound, the Prophet (sa) massaged some of his salvia upon the wound and by the permission of Allah it healed immediately. News of Ka'bs death spread rapidly throughout Medina and those whose intentions were to rid themselves of the Prophet (sa) and his followers, were, for the time being, hesitant to take further action.

CHAPTER 65 THE OATH OF ABU SUFYAN

When news of Ka'bs death reached Mecca, Abu Sufyan was even more determined to take revenge and swore an oath that he would not bathe until he had led an attack against the Prophet (sa). In a state of fury he mustered two hundred men from the remains of the Koraysh army and left Mecca by way of Najd. After many days travel they reached a waterhole in the vicinity of Mount Thayb, which lies outside Medina and there he ordered his army to strike camp. As darkness approached and the Muslims were at prayer in the Mosque, Abu Sufyan ventured into Medina and made straight for the house of a Jew named Huyay, Akhtab's son, and announced himself as he knocked at the door. Huyay took fright and refused to open the door, so Abu Sufyan made his way to the house of Salaam, Mishkam's son who was not only a chief but also the banker of the Jewish tribe of Nadir. This time he was

made most welcome, Salaam invited him into his home, entertained him with food and wine for he guessed the reason for Abu Sufyan's visit and was eager to help him achieve his goal. Later that same night, Abu Sufyan returned to his camp and the next day he sent a party of his men onto the outskirts of Medina. When they reached Al Urayd, a suburb of Medina, they found an Ansar and his companion tending to young palm trees whereupon they attacked and killed them, then torched the newly planted grove and returned to camp. When news of the martyred companions reached the ears of the Prophet (sa) he and his companions rode out in pursuit of the aggressors, however, it was to no avail because upon the marauder's return Abu Sufyan ordered his men to break camp. In their haste to break camp they left some of their provisions and baggage behind, for memories of Badr were still very fresh upon their minds and they did not wish to face the Prophet (sa) again. The Prophet (sa) and his companions pursued Abu Sufyan until they reached a place called Karkaratu'l Kudr but the Koraysh were long gone and it was thought pointless to continue any further so they returned to Medina.

THE PROPHET’S COMPASSION AND MERCY TO A BEDOUIN

Allah honors the rank and status of our beloved Prophet (sa) saying:

"We have not sent you (Prophet Muhammad) except as a mercy to all the worlds." Koran 21:107

The Prophet (sa) never, ever refused or even hesitated to give anything away. Even when he had nothing at all to give he would tell the asker to go to one of the merchants in the town, buy whatever he needed, and have it charged to his account. As soon as he was in a position to settle the matter he did so. One day as the Prophet (sa) was with his companions a Bedouin came to him and asked for a gift. As was his custom the Prophet (sa) smiled and gave the Bedouin a gift and inquired, "Have I been good to you?" The Bedouin abruptly replied, "No, you have not, you have not done well." The companions were outraged by the Bedouin's lack of manners and were about to seize him, but the Prophet (sa) gestured to them to leave him alone, and went into his apartment. A few minutes later, the Prophet (sa) asked the Bedouin to join him and added more to his gift and asked the same question. The Bedouin was delighted with the gift and replied, "Yes, may Allah repay you and your family well!" Then the Prophet (sa) said to the Bedouin, "What you said angered my companions. If you like, say what you just said in my presence to them so that whatever is held against you in their hearts is removed." The Bedouin agreed and returned to them, repeated what he had said to the Prophet (sa) then left. A short while after, the Prophet (sa) returned to his companions and said, "The example of that man and myself is like a man who has a she-camel that bolted from him. But when people chase after it, it only makes her run away still further. Then the owner tells the people to leave him and his she-camel, saying: I am more compassionate and better to her than you. Then he walks in front of it and takes several clods of dirt and drives it until it comes and kneels, then he saddles it, and mounts it. If I had let you do what you had a mind to do when the man spoke, you would have killed him and he would have entered the Fire."

THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR HIJRA

The second year after the migration was drawing to an end. It had been a year of both happiness and sorrow. In it Allah had sent down the order to fight the unbelievers when provoked, and had given victory to the Muslims over them at Badr. He had also sent down two new obligations. Obligations which were to constitute two of the pillars of Islam; namely the fast during the month of Ramadan with its obligatory charity of 2.5% of one’s lunar annual savings at the end of the month to those deservedly in need.

Regarding the Fast, Allah says: "Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, perchance you will be cautious. (Fast) a certain number of days, but if any one of you is ill or on a journey let him (fast) a similar number of days later on; and for those who are unable (to fast), there is a ransom - the feeing of a needy person. Whosoever volunteers good, it is good for him; But to fast is better for you if you but knew. The month of Ramadan is the month in which the Koran was sent down, a guidance for people, and clear verses of guidance and the criterion. Therefore, whoever of you witnesses the month, let him fast. But he who is ill, or on a journey shall (fast) a similar number (of days) later on. Allah wants ease for you and does note want hardship for you. And that you fulfill the number of days and exalt Allah who has guided you in order that you be thankful." Koran 2:183-185

and regarding the obligatory charity Allah says:

"The obligatory charity shall be only for the poor and the needy, and for those who work to collect it, and to influence hearts (to belief), for ransoming captives, and debtors in the Way of Allah and the destitute traveler. It is an obligation from Allah. Allah is Knowing, Wise." Koran 9:60

The direction of Kibla had been changed from Jerusalem to Mecca and Lady Rukiyyah, may Allah be pleased with her, passed away and her youngest sister, Lady Fatima had married Ali.

THE PRINCIPALS OF ISLAM

At some point during these early years after the migration the Angel Gabriel was sent by Allah to the Prophet (sa) to complete the principals of the Islamic belief. Omar, Khattab’s son related the occasion when he and some of the companions were sitting with the Holy Prophet (sa) when an unknown inquirer suddenly arrived. Omar described him as having brilliantly white clothes and jet black hair, however there was no sign of traveling whatsoever upon him. The inquirer sat down in front of the Prophet (sa) and their knees touched. He placed his hands on his thighs and asked, "Prophet Muhammad (sa), tell me about Islam.’ The Prophet (sa) replied, "Islam is that you bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, and that you establish the prayer, pay the obligatory (2.5% of

one′s annual lunar savings) charity, fast the month of Ramadan and make the Pilgrimage to the House (Ka′bah in Mecca) if you can afford it.″ The companions were surprised to hear their visitor confirm the correctness of the Prophet′s answer saying, ‶That is correct.″ Then the inquirer said, ‶Tell me about belief (iman).″ To this the Prophet (sa) replied, ‵It is that you believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and that you believe in the Holy Planning. Yet again the inquirer said, ‶That is correct, now tell me about Perfection (ihsan).″ The Prophet (sa) replied, ‶It is that you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you do not see Him, know that He is watching you.″ And the inquirer confirmed the correctness of the answer. Then the inquirer asked, ‶Tell me about the Hour of Judgement.″ The Prophet (sa) replied, ‶He who is being asked knows no more about it than the one who asks.″ So the inquirer asked, ‶Then tell me about some of the signs of its approach.″ To this the Prophet (sa) replied: ‶The female slave will give birth to her master, and the bare-footed, naked, penniless goat-herders will live arrogantly in high mansions.″ And the inquirer confirmed the correctness of the answer yet again. Having asked these questions the inquirer departed and the Prophet (sa) turned to Omar and asked, ‶Omar do you know who the inquirer was?″ Omar replied, ‶Allah and His Messenger (sa) know best.″ Whereupon the Prophet (sa) told him, ‶It was Gabriel who came to teach you your Religion.″ Further details of these obligatory principals are given at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 66 LADY HAFSAH

Hafsah was the daughter of Omar and among the few who were literate. When Khunays returned from his migration to Abyssinia a few years before, she had married him, however, the marriage was destined to be short lived as he was recently martyred at Badr and it grieved Omar to see his eighteen year old daughter alone. During the second year, Othman, a friend of Omar, had lost his beloved wife Lady Rukiyah, daughter of the Prophet (sa) so Omar proposed that he might like to marry his daughter. When Othman told Omar that he did not wish to remarry for the time being he was disappointed and felt somewhat hurt by his answer. Omar, as is the case of all fathers, was anxious to secure a good marriage for his daughter so he approached another of his dearest friends, Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr's answer was also evasive which really hurt Omar very deeply. He had offered two of his best friends his beloved daughter's hand in marriage yet neither of them were prepared to accept the proposal. A little while after, Omar went to the Prophet (sa) and told him how upset he was at the reluctance of his close friends to marry his daughter. After the Prophet (sa) had listened to his grievance he spoke with words of indication saying, "I will show you a better son-in-law than Othman, and I will show him (Othman) a better father-in-law than you." Happiness spread over Omar's face as he realized that the Prophet (sa) after the completion of Hafsah's waiting period, would offer her his own hand in marriage; then the second realization dawned upon him that the Prophet (sa) would give another of his daughters, Lady Umm Kulthum, to Othman in marriage. Later, when Omar met Abu Bakr, Abu Bakr told him that the reason he had not accepted his offer was that he had heard the Prophet (sa) inquiring about Lady Hafsah and that it was on this account alone that he had been evasive. After the prescribed four months

of the waiting period were concluded, the Prophet (sa) asked for Lady Hafsah's hand in marriage whereupon a room was added on to the Prophet's quarters and the marriage took place. Lady Ayesha was happy to have someone nearer her own age as a companion, whilst Lady Swaydah loved her as if she were her own daughter. Lady Hafsah was among those who was blessed to learn the entire Koran by heart.

CHAPTER 67 THE REQUEST OF LADY FATIMA

The Prophet (sa) had been given several people who tended to the needs of his household. One might not have realized that those who served were not freemen as they were treated no differently than anyone else in his family and shared the same food. The Prophet (sa) was always mindful of other peoples' feelings and on this account he never referred to them with the degrading word "slave" rather, he respectfully called them his "youths". Some of his youths had already embraced Islam and been freed, however, such was their love of the Prophet (sa) and his family that not even their freedom would tear them away from serving him so they chose to remain in his household. It was now several months into the third year and Lady Fatima and Ali, like so many others struggled hard to make a living. Every day Ali, would go to the well, draw water then sell it in the market, whilst Lady Fatima, who was to give birth later that year, would grind grain for the community. There had been a time when her gentle hands had been soft, but now the arduous work of grinding had caused her hands to become callused and rough, and all too often her skin would crack and bleed. Neither Lady Fatima nor Ali were of a complaining nature, rather, they were grateful to Allah for His blessings, however, one day Ali returned home with severe pains in his chest. He had strained himself drawing and carrying water from the well so he asked Lady Fatima to go to her father and ask him to release one of his youths to him. Lady Fatima was hesitant to make such a request, but eventually she went to her father's house. When she met him they greeted one another and during the time they spent together he asked if there was anything special she wanted to say to him. Lady Fatima was overcome by embarrassment and told her father that she had come to give him the greetings and returned home without making the request. Upon her return, Ali inquired what had happened, so she told him that she had been too shy to ask so they returned together to speak with the Prophet (sa). News of Islam had started to spread throughout Arabia and people started to migrate to Medina and so almost every day a new face or two would arrive. Most of the migrants arrived hungry with only the clothes they wore on their back and so they were lodged in a building attached to the Mosque. There was little enough food to go around as it was. Many were the times that the Prophet (sa) and his family went hungry and would encourage his companions to share whatever they had with each other saying that one portion of food would suffice two people, and that two portions would suffice four and so on. When Ali asked the Prophet (sa) for the services of a youth, the Prophet (sa) told him he was unable to do so as it was his intention to raise money through their sale in order to feed the hungry new Muslims. Lady Fatima an Ali understood that the need of the new Muslims was greater than theirs and so they returned home.

SPIRITUAL HELP

Later that night after Lady Fatima and Ali had retired, the Prophet (sa) went to visit them. When he reached their house he knocked at the door and out of politeness asked permission to enter. After exchanging the greetings, the Prophet (sa) said, "Shall I tell you something better than that which you asked of me?" Gabriel has taught me to say ten times after each prayer, 'Exalted is Allah, and then 'Praise be to Allah' followed by 'Allah is Great'; when you go to bed repeat each exaltation thirty-three times." In the years that followed Ali was heard to say that from that day onwards he never failed to exalt Allah after each prayer and at night.

A HOUSE NEARER TO THE PROPHET (sa)

Although Lady Fatima's house was not too distant from the Mosque, the Prophet (sa) wished that his beloved daughter lived nearer to him. When Haritha, a distant relative of the Prophet (sa) learned of his wish he went to him and offered his own home which was much nearer to the Mosque. The Prophet accepted Haritha's generosity and supplicated for blessings upon him. Not long after, Lady Fatima and Ali moved to their new home and awaited the birth of their first child.

CHAPTER 68 THE CARAVAN TO IRAQ

The Muslims had succeeded to ally themselves with several tribes on the trade routes that lay to the north of Medina. As a result the Koraysh caravans were now forced to journey northwards through the practically waterless and desolate desert known as the Najd, and so, it was for this reason the Koraysh caravans had all but ceased to travel northwards during the hot summer months. As the cooler months of early autumn approached the Koraysh made plans for a northward bound caravan to Iraq. They were anxious on account of their delayed trading to sell their silver ornaments, ingots and utensils so it was decided that Safwan should lead the richly laden caravan through the Najd onto Iraq to trade their wares. One day, an Ansar happened to overhear some Jews mentioning Safwan's caravan and went straight to the Prophet (sa) to report the matter. When the Prophet (sa) heard the news he appointed Zayd, with a hundred horsemen under his command, to ride onto the water hole of Karadah and lay in wait for the caravan. At Karadah, Zayd put Safwan and his men to flight and returned in triumph to Medina with not only the silver merchandise but camels and several captives.

CHAPTER 69 PRELUDE TO THE ENCOUNTER AT UHUD

During the Encounter at Badr the previous year each Koraysh tribe had suffered loss of life, and so it was not surprising that revenge was always upon their mind. Amongst the Koraysh were two poets were held in high regard their names were Amr Jumahi and Musafi. Amr had been taken prisoner at Badr but his family were poor and therefore unable to pay a ransom for

his freedom. When the matter was brought to the Prophet's attention, he, out of mercy and compassion, released him without a second thought. However, Amr soon forgot the Prophet's generosity and when Safwan offered to pay him to compose provocative verses extolling the merits of the Koraysh and their attempts to route the Prophet (sa) he had no qualms and accepted. Safwan had no doubt that Amr's poem would be a great asset in his effort to persuade new tribes to ally themselves to them and strengthen existing ties when the poem was recited to them. Safwan's assumption was right, his investment proved to be money well spent and through it he was able to secure his aim as tribes sat mesmerized, inflamed by it words. The poem was so potent that when the Koraysh womenfolk heard it their emotions ran wild as they took blood curdling oaths swearing to revenge themselves and welcomed the day when the Koraysh would rise up against the Prophet (sa). The foremost amongst the women were Hind, wife of Abu Sufyan and daughter of Utba who had been killed by Hamza at Badr together with two other close relatives; Umm Hakim, wife of Ikrima the son of Abu Jahl; Fatima, Walid's daughter; Barza, daughter of Masood Takafi, chief of Ta'if; Rita the wife of Amr, Al As' son, and Khunas the mother of Mus'ab, Umair's son.

WAHSHI, THE ABYSINNIAN

Tuayma, the uncle of Jubair, had also been killed at Badr by Hamza, so Hind, wishing to avenge her father's death approached Tuayma's Abyssinian slave Wahshi -- who was an expert spear thrower and seldom known to miss his target -- and promised to buy him his freedom if he killed Hamza during the next encounter.

THE KORAYSH ARMY GROWS

When news of the loss of Safwan's caravan reached Mecca, the Koraysh were more determined than ever to take their revenge and so preparations of greater intensity were now set in motion. A hundred men from the Thakif and men from the tribe of Kinanah rallied to the side of the Koraysh and so it was that the Koraysh army started to expand.

CHAPTER 70 THE BIRTHS OF AL HASAN & AL HUSSAIN

The cooler months of winter in which Ramadan fell that year had arrived and on 15th of Ramadan, Lady Fatima, lovingly known as "The Radiant Blossom" gave birth to a son. Word was taken immediately to the Prophet (sa) of his grandson's safe arrival whereupon he exalted Allah and made haste to visit his daughter and named his grandson Al Hasan. As Prophet Muhammad (sa) held the tiny babe in his arms for the first time he gently whispered the words of the call to prayer into his ears and thanked Allah for his safe delivery. Just fifty-five days after his birth Lady Fatima conceived again and in the months to come bore another son whose name was Al Hussain.

THE LETTER

A day or two after the birth of Al Hasan, a disturbing, urgent letter was delivered to the Prophet (sa). The letter was from Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, who, although he had not as yet converted to Islam and remained in Mecca held the best interests of his nephew at heart. Abbas had observed the escalation and build-up of Abu Sufyan's army, together with its increased weaponry and noted that the new allies of the Koraysh were prepared to rise up with Abu Sufyan against the Prophet (sa). As soon as he learned that the army was about to march, he sent a rider post haste to Medina with the news. Such was the speed of the rider that he made the regular journey of eleven days in just three, thereby buying the Prophet (sa) valuable time in which to prepare. The letter also informed the Prophet (sa) of the size of the army which had now reached three thousand strong; each soldier had a camel, seven hundred men had coats of mail, and then there was a cavalry of two hundred horsemen with a spare set of horses. The letter also spoke of their womenfolk's intent to ride out with their men to encourage them and their new allies from the tribes of Thakif and Kinanah.

PREPARATIONS

On account of the arrival of the new Muslim migrants to Medina, the army of the Prophet (sa) was now in the region of a thousand men, and with Abbas' advanced warning they had a week in which to prepare themselves and were able to round up their livestock from the outlying areas of Medina and bring them into the City. However, there was nothing they could do to safeguard their crops which they feared would provide fodder for the mounts of their enemy. Guards were positioned around Medina; when it came to guarding the Prophet (sa), Sa’ad, Muadh's son and Sa’ad, Ubadah's son together with Usayd and another insisted on standing guard. In the meantime, the Koraysh marched out of Mecca towards the coast, then turned inland and marched within five miles of Medina where they halted. Having taken a short rest they marched on again in a north-easterly direct and struck camp in a valley that lay below the Mount of Uhud where their mounts could graze. Meanwhile, the Prophet (sa) sent scouts out to monitor the movements of the enemy who reported back that the account Abbas had sent was indeed accurate. However, the scouts told him that they were of the opinion that from their observations the enemy did not appear to be preparing themselves for an immediate strike; there was still some time left. Shortly after this the Prophet (sa) had a vision in which he saw himself mounted on a ram wearing an impregnable coat-of-mail, carrying a sword with a dent in it. He also saw some animals, which he knew to be his, sacrificed before his eyes. The following morning he mentioned his vision to his companions and explained that the impregnable coat-of-mail represented Medina, and that the dent in his sword represented a wound against his person, and that the sacrificed animals were some of his companions. Then he made mention of the ram on which he rode and told them, that if Allah willed, it was a Koraysh chieftain whom they would kill.

A MATTER OF OPINION

The Prophet (sa) was of the opinion that they should stay in Medina and fight there, however,

there were among his companions those more familiar with the strategies of warfare so he called for a meeting. Abdullah, Ubayy's son was the first to speak, he, like some of his elder companions was of the opinion that the engagement should be in Medina and protect their women and children in its fortresses. However, a young Muslim stood up and said, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), lead us out against the enemy. Do not let them think we are afraid of them or that we are weak." These few words were enough to rouse the hearts of the majority, and Abdullah felt spurned at the rejection of his opinion. In the meantime, Hamza and Sa’ad reminded the congregation of the blessings they received at Badr, when, like now, they had been greatly out numbered. Amongst those gathered was an elderly Ansar by the name of Khaythamah whose son Sa’ad had been martyred at Badr. Khaythamah stood up and told all those present of a vision he had seen the previous night saying, "Last night, I saw my son, he looked so radiant. I saw that from the fruits and rivers of the Garden he is given everything he might desire. Then he invited me saying, 'Come to us, be our companion in Paradise. All that my Lord has promised I have found to be true!' I am old and anxious to meet my Lord, so supplicate O Messenger of Allah (sa), that He will grant me martyrdom and the company of Sa’ad in Paradise." The Prophet (sa) was touched by Khaythamah’s devotion and supplicated for him. No sooner had Prophet Muhammad (sa) finished supplicating for Khaythamah than Malik, Sinan's son, from the tribe of Khazraj stood up and said, "O Messenger of Allah (sa) there are two good things before us, Allah will either grant us victory over them -- and that is what we desire -- or else He will grant us martyrdom!" The gathering was motivated in such a way that the plan to march out of Medina to engage their enemy was adopted.

THE FRIDAY PRAYER BEFORE THE ENCOUNTER OF UHUD

It was Friday 15th of Shawwal so the Prophet (sa) went to the Mosque to conduct the Jumah prayer. During the sermon he spoke of the merits and conduct of Holy War and told them that they would be victorious as long as they obeyed his instructions. After the service was over the congregation dispersed to make ready their final preparations for war, however two remained behind in the Mosque as they wished to speak with the Prophet (sa) alone. One of the men was Abdullah, Amr's son who had been among those that pledged their allegiance at Aqabah on the second occasion.

THE VISION OF ABDULLAH

Abdullah had seen a vision and thought he understood its meaning, however, he knew the Prophet (sa) was more knowledgeable and wanted the Prophet (sa) to interpret it for him. Abdullah told the Prophet (sa) that in his vision he had seen an Ansar by the name of Mubashir who told him that in a few days he would come to them. Abdullah had asked Mubashir in the vision where he was, to which he replied, 'In Paradise,' and then informed him that in Paradise they were able to do whatsoever pleased them. Abdullah told the Prophet (sa) that at the conclusion of his vision he had inquired of Mubashir whether he had been among those martyred at Badr, Mubashir replied that he had and that he had been resurrected. The Prophet (sa) confirmed Abdullah's understanding and said, "This is your martyrdom." Abdullah

was happy with the news and returned home to make ready for the hostilities. As Abdullah entered his house he found his son preparing his weapons and armor for the morrow. Abdullah, whose wife had recently passed away, had just one son called Jabir, and seven very young daughters, so he spoke gently to his son saying, "It is not right that we should leave them (his sisters) without a man, they are young and I fear for them. I will go alone with the Prophet (sa) tomorrow and if Allah chooses that I should be martyred I entrust them to your care." Disappointed, but obedient to his father's wishes, when the time came to march Jabir remained behind to look after his sisters.

THE MARRIAGE OF HANZALAH

Weeks before, Hanzalah, Abu Amir's son who was betrothed to his cousin Jamilah, Ubayy's daughter, had set that very same Friday as his wedding day. He wanted to take part in the hostilities but was unsure whether he should postpone his marriage and upon this account he now waited behind in the Mosque to seek the advice of the Prophet (sa). The Prophet (sa) was understanding and told Hanzalah that he should go ahead with the marriage as arranged, spend the night in Medina and then catch them up the following morning. The Prophet (sa) was always concerned for the welfare and protection of his community, so he issued instructions that the ladies together with their children be housed in the safety of the fortresses under the protection of Yaman and Thabit who were instructed to provide for their needs and protect them.

THE WARNING OF THE PROPHET (sa)

Time for the afternoon prayer arrived and all assembled to offer their prayer. After its conclusion, Omar and Abu Bakr accompanied the Prophet (sa) to his home and helped him dress in readiness for the march. Soon after the small Muslim army began to assemble outside the Prophet's house in preparation for the march. When Sa’ad, Mu’adh’s son arrived he spoke harshly to them saying, "You have forced the Messenger of Allah (sa) to go out against his will. Perhaps a command will be sent down and the matter revised!" Shortly after this the Prophet (sa) came out from his house wearing his armor. Around his helmet he had wound a piece of white cloth to form a turban, and under his breast-plate he wore a coat of mail. His shield had been fastened onto his back and around his waist he wore a leather belt from which his sword hung. The words of Sa’ad hung heavily upon the hearts of the Muslims and they wished they had held their tongues over the issue whether or not to engage the enemy outside Medina and said, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), it is not for us to oppose you in anything, do whatever you feel is the most fitting." However, the Prophet (sa) reminded them, "Once a Prophet has put on his armor, it is not for him to take it off until Allah has judged between him and his enemies. Therefore, do as I say and go forward in the Name of Allah - victory will be yours if you are steadfast." Then he called for three lances and attached to each a banner giving one to Mus'ab, who represented the Muhajir, another to Usayd from the tribe of Aws and the other to Hubab from the tribe of Khazraj. The Prophet's horse, Sakb, was

brought for him to mount, but before mounting he appointed Abdullah, Umm Maktum's son to lead the prayers in his absence. Abdullah was blind and consequently unable to take part in the conflict although his heart was with them. After he settled himself on Sakb, the Prophet (sa) asked for his bow and hung it over his shoulder and then his spear was handed to him. Only the Prophet (sa) was mounted and Sa′ad the son of Mu'adh and Sa′ad Ubaydah's son marched in front of the Prophet (sa) and his ill equipped army followed behind with just one hundred men having armor sufficient to protect their person; the remainder had nothing to protect themselves.

RAFI AND SAMURA

After the Prophet (sa) and his army had marched but a few miles from Medina, he called for a halt to review his troops and noticed that many young would-be warriors had accompanied the army just as they had done at Badr. Much to their disappointment the Prophet (sa) told them that the forthcoming encounter was no place for them and they were to return home. Amongst the youngsters were Zayd, Thabit's son; Bara, Azib's son; Abu Sai'd Khudri' Abdullah, Omar's son and Araba Ausi. Rafi, Khadij's son and Samura were so very anxious to be accepted as one of the Prophet's men that when the youngsters were gathered together they had stood on the tip of their toes in order to appear taller and Rafi had been accepted as he was already known as a skillful archer. However, Samura was at the point of being told to return when he pointed out that he had been the victor on many occasions when he and Rafi had fought competitively. To prove his point Rafi and Samura now fought each other in friendly combat and Samura, much to his delight, proved his strength and was allowed to join the ranks of the Prophet's men.

DESERTION

At a place halfway between Medina and Uhud the Prophet (sa) and his army stopped to rest for a while and offer their prayer. During the rest period, Abdullah, Ubayy's son, was approached by a party of his men who expressed their desire not to take part in the hostilities and return Medina. Abdullah who had already expressed his reluctance to march needed no further persuasion so he gathered the rest of his men -- whose number accounted for one third of the Prophet's army -- and said, "He listened to them, and not to me. Why should we loose our lives!" Amongst Abdullah's men were doubters and hypocrites -- this was exactly the excuse they had been looking for as a means to escape the hostilities. All agreed to return to Medina and left without even mentioning their decision to the Prophet (sa). When one of the companions also by the named of Abdullah learned of their desertion he chased after them on his horse. Upon catching them up he entreated them not to abandon them saying, "Fellow tribesmen, I call upon you by Allah not to abandon your people and your Prophet (sa) now that the enemy is near!" In a patronizing manner they replied, "If we knew you were going to fight we would not have abandoned you, however, we do not think there will be hostilities." Abdullah pleaded with them over and over again until he realized he was wasting his time and as he turned to leave them he cursed them saying, "May Allah curse you, you enemies of

Allah! Allah will make His Prophet (sa) independent of you!" and returned to join the Prophet (sa). Now that their numbers had been substantially reduced, a companion asked the Prophet (sa) whether he thought they should call upon the help of the Jews with whom they were allied and obligated to lend their assistance, however, in light of recent events they could not be trusted and so the Prophet (sa) replied there was no need for them.

THE SHORT CUT

The Prophet (sa) and his army were refreshed from their march, so, in the coolness of the evening they continued their march onto Uhud. Not long after they had resumed their march, the Prophet (sa) inquired if anyone knew a better road that would take them near to the Koraysh camp. Abu Khaythamah said that he knew of one and led the army through land that belonged to the tribe of Haritha, and then through land belonging to a blind man by the name of Mirba, Kayzi's son. When Mirba learned of the Prophet's approach he came out of his house and started throwing handfuls of sand at the army muttering, "Perhaps he is the Messenger of Allah (sa), however, I will not allow you to pass through my gardens." He is also reported as having said, "By Allah, if I could be sure that I would not hit someone else Muhammad, I would throw it in your face!" No sooner had the words left his mouth than several of the Prophet's companions set upon him as the Prophet (sa) mercifully called out, "Do not kill him! He is blind both in heart and sight." However, Sa′ad, Zayd's son, did not hear the instruction and struck Mirba and wounded his head.

THE SLOPES OF UHUD

In the darkness of night the army marched on passing above the gorge of Uhud. As the thin thread of dawn appeared upon the horizon they reached a point that overlooked the wadi where the Koraysh had set up camp. The Prophet's plan was to march on a little further so that they would be protected by the mountain from the rear and have the advantage of being above the Koraysh and their allies. When at last they reached a suitable slope they halted and Bilal made the call to prayer. After its conclusion the Prophet (sa) spoke to his men saying, "Indeed, whosoever remembers the purpose and directs his soul in earnest with patience, effort and does not doubt will receive a rich reward as well as spoils."

THE VISION OF JAMILAH

Hanzalah, who had not marched out with the Prophet (sa) on account of his marriage, had, a few moments before, caught up with the Prophet (sa) and went to greet him. On the night of his marriage, his bride, Jamilah, had seen a vision in which she saw Hanzalah standing at the Gate of Paradise, when she looked again she saw that Hanzalah had entered and knew she would never see her husband again in this world as martyrdom had been chosen for him.

THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE PROPHET (sa)

The freshness of the early hours of morning were now upon them and the Prophet (sa) called upon is companions to assemble before him. Amongst those chosen to accompany the Prophet (sa) were his cousin, Sa'ad, Said, and Sa'ib, Othman's son -- all of whom were excellent archers. The Prophet (sa) now placed fifty of his best archers under the command of Abdullah, Jubair's son, an Ansar from the tribe of Aws. Then the Prophet (sa) instructed the archers to take up their positions on an elevated part of the slope that lay to the left of the main detachment of the Koraysh army and then ordered them saying, "You must keep their cavalry away from us with you arrows. Do not let them come upon us from the rear. No matter whether the encounter goes in our favor or against us -- remain in your positions. Should you see us gleaning the spoils of war, do not try to take your share of it -- if you see us being martyred, do not come to our assistance." The instructions were very clear for he was an excellent communicator and administrator. It was time for the Prophet (sa) to don his armor; having done so he took hold of his sword and brandished it in the air asking, "Who will take this sword together with its right?" Omar did not hesitate to step forward but the Prophet (sa) did not respond and asked the question once more. This time Zubair jumped at the chance of taking it but again the Prophet (sa) did not respond and as he did an Ansar from the tribe of Khazraj named Abu Dujanah inquired, "O Messenger of Allah (sa) what is its right?" "Its right," the Prophet (sa) replied, "is that you should take it and kill the enemy with it until its blade is bent." Whereupon Abu Dujanah seized upon the opportunity to be the first to claim it. Abu Dujanah's reputation as a warrior was well known and those who came across him on the battlefield were fearful of an encounter with him. In times of war Abu Dujanah would wear a red turban wrapped around his helmet and over the course of time the turban had been rightly named by the Khazraj the "Turban of Death". Now, with the Prophet's sword in hand wearing his red turban wrapped around his helmet he strutted through the ranks of the army in such a fashion that the Prophet (sa) commented, "Except in times and places such as this, that is the strut Allah hates." With the Khazraj tribe of Alimah, the son of Jusham, on one side and the Aws tribe of Harith, Nabit's son, on the other, the final preparations for hostilities were now complete.

KORAYSH POSITIONS OF COMMAND

The Koraysh planned their mode of attack with much thought and arranged their ranks in a way so as to gain the best possible striking power. Commanding their cavalry were two of their best warriors, Khalid, Waleed's son command the right flank, whilst Ikrima, the son of Abu Jahl commanded their left flank with an additional two hundred horses in reserve. The various detachments of well equipped archers were commanded by Abdullah, Rabi'as son, whereas Talha was appointed to be the Koraysh standard bearer.

TWO OF THE BELIEVING LADIES

During the second pledge of allegiance at Aqabah, two ladies from Medina had also given their pledge. One of these ladies was Nusaybah, the wife of Ghaziyyah. Ghaziyyah and his two sons

had joined the Prophet (sa) on the march to Uhud and Nusaybah longed to accompany them, however, no permission had been given for women to take part in the forthcoming encounter. Nusaybah, being of strong character, realized that the wounded would need care, attention and water, so after the army left Medina she filled her water-skin and followed their tracks taking with her a sword, bow and a supply of arrows. Another lady by the name of Umm Sulaym, the mother of Anas, had the same idea. Likewise, she had filled her water-skin to provide relief for the wounded on the battlefield and set of for Uhud. However, neither knew of each other's intention until they met each other near the companions surrounding the Prophet (sa) shortly after the commencement of the hostilities.

CHAPTER 71 THE ENCOUNTER AT UHUD

The sun had now risen and the Prophet's army had been detected so Abu Sufyan gave the order to advance. Instead of the customary beat of the drum that proceeded hostilities, the Koraysh womenfolk, led by Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, burst into impassioned songs as they beat their tambourines. The themes of many of their songs were in praise of those killed at Badr and cried out for their menfolk not to forget but to remember, and revenge themselves so that the honor of their tribe might be restored.

CALLS FOR DESERTION

The armies were but a short distance from each other when Abu Sufyan halted his men and called upon the Ansar to desert the Prophet (sa). He had not anticipated either the strength of their belief or the courage Allah had given the Ansar nor yet their undivided loyalty and love they had for His Prophet (sa), and so Abu Sufyan had, not long before, assured his men that they could count upon the Ansar to turn and desert. The unexpected Ansar's reply came quickly as they hurled stones and invoked curses upon him; he had indeed miscalculated their response. A former resident of Medina, Abu Amir, whose son Hanzalah had married Jamilah the day before, had, unknown to Hanzalah, joined with the Koraysh against the Prophet (sa). Abu Amir had claimed for many years that he followed the ways of Prophet Abraham and in light of his claim one might have supposed he would have embraced Islam, for both prophets preached the same message that Allah is One and that it is He alone that is to be worshipped. However, stubborn pride stood in his way and he chose to side with the pagan idolaters which was totally against the teachings of Prophet Abraham. If, as he claimed, that followed Prophet Abraham he would have recognized not only the truth in all the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (sa) but also seen these teachings implemented in his exemplary day-to-day life as well as that of Hanzalah and the companions of the Prophet (sa). Before Islam Abu Amir had been highly thought of by the people Medina and regarded as being a pious person. He too thought that the Ansar would listen to him if he called upon them to lay down their arms and desert the Prophet (sa). His pride was soon shattered after he called out, "Do you remember me, I am Abu Amir!" "Yes, you evil-doer," came the reply, "we recognize you, may Allah frustrate your wickedness!" The Koraysh standard bearer, Talha, now stepped forward

and cried out in challenging mockery: "Muslims, is there any amongst you that can send me to Hell, or else enter Paradise under my hand!" Ali was quick to respond and smote him with his sword. Talha's mockery then fell upon himself. Othman, one of Talha's two brothers, grabbed hold of the standard whilst the Koraysh womenfolk goaded him into taking revenge chanting, "It is the duty of the standard bearer to dip his spear in blood or to break it on the enemy!" This time Hamza stepped out to meet Othman wielding his double edge sword saying: "I am the son of Saki Hajaj!," which referred to the honored position his father had held to provide water for the pilgrims. With that he struck Othman on his shoulder with such force that his sword slit him right down to his waist. During the course of the hostilities the sword of Abdullah, Jahsh's son, was smote from his hand, and no matter how hard he searched for it, it could not be found. He returned to the Prophet (sa) to ask for a replacement. However, there were none to be had, so, as at the Encounter of Badr, the Prophet picked up a palm branch, gave it to him and it was transformed into a sword and Abdullah rejoined the hostilities.

THE BRAVERY OF HAMZA, ALI AND ABU DUJANAH

By now the Koraysh womenfolk had retreated to a safe distance where they continued to incite their men to fight. Hamza, Ali and Abu Dujanah were foremost in leading the Muslim attack and plunged deep into the ranks of the enemy. Their gallantry succeeded in disrupting the lines of the enemy and as they advanced they killed or injured anyone in their path. As Abu Dujanah turned to engage his next combatant, his sword touched the hand of Hind whereupon he quickly withdrew it as he knew it would be unworthy for the sword of the Prophet (sa) to kill a woman.

THE MARTYDOM OF HAMZA

In the meantime, the Muslim archers from their vantage point on the mountain's slope, directed their shots at Khalid and his cavalry, and many fell. As the hostilities intensified, the Abyssinian slave, Wahshi, searched for Hamza and did not concern himself with the fighting. The moment he awaited to earn his freedom was near at hand. Hamza was about to put an end to a standard bearer and in doing so, just as he raised his sword, a gap in his armor laid bear his navel. Wahshi seized upon the moment, threw his spear with such accuracy and force that it went right through Hamza's navel. Valiantly, Hamza tried to continue to fight but his legs collapsed and he lay martyred on the field of Uhud. Wahshi cared nothing for the fighting going on around him and made his way to Hamza's martyred body, retrieved his spear and returned to the camp saying, "I have achieved my aim. I killed him only for the sake of gaining my freedom." KORAYSH STANDARD BEARERS Before the hostilities commenced Abu Sufyan had spoken of the disgrace that had befallen them at Badr when their standard bearers had allowed themselves to be taken prisoner. He told his army that on no account should this be allowed to happen again. The Koraysh standard bearers started to fall one after the other, but until that moment there had always been someone to grasp the standard before it touched the ground. As yet another standard bearer fell, Sawab grasped it from him, whereupon a Muslim struck him with such a severe blow that both his hands were severed.

Sawab fell to the ground but managed to prevent the standard from touching it and held the standard pressed tightly to his chest. As he was died he was heard crying out, "I have done my duty!" During the confusion of the hostilities none of the Koraysh realized that their standard had fallen until one of their womenfolk saw it being trampled upon the ground and rushed over to raise it up. The Koraysh rallied around her and for a brief moment there was a resurgence of effort.

THE MARTYDOM OF HANZALAH

Hanzalah had thrown himself into the hostilities and was now at its center engaging Abu Sufyan in fierce combat. He was at the point of dispatching him when a man from Layth came to Abu Sufyan's aid and thrust his spear into Hanzalah. Hanzalah fell and Layth delivered a further thrust and the vision of his bride, Jamilah, was fulfilled. As Hanzalah was being martyred, the Prophet (sa) was made aware of his circumstances by the angels and turned gently to his companions saying, "The angels are washing your companion." Later, when the Prophet (sa) spoke to Jamilah, he comforted her telling her that he had witnessed the angels taking her husband's body and washing it between the heavens and earth with water collected from the clouds in silver vessels. Jamilah told the Prophet (sa) of her vision and that when she had told Hanzalah what she had seen he had been so anxious to join him that he left before taking a major shower.

THE DISOBEYED ORDER

Despite their overwhelming numbers, the Koraysh army had been beaten back and forced to retreat. Victory now lay insight for the Prophet's army and the opportunity to seize the spoils of war presented itself to those on the battlefield whilst the archers entrusted to hold a strategic position on the mountain slope, looked down and saw their companions helping themselves to the spoils of war. Many of the archers thought the hostilities were over and were eager to claim their share of the spoils and decided to abandon their position despite the Prophet's instruction. Their commander, Abdullah, Jubair's son, entreated them not to abandon their posts but the temptation was too great and all but a few obeyed the Prophet's instruction and remained loyal at their posts. Khalid, Waleed's son, noticed that many of the archers had left their posts. Hastily, he regrouped his men and seized the opportunity to launch an attack on the Muslims from the rear. With the weakened position of the archers the assault was successful and Abdullah, along with the few that remained faithful to the instruction of the Prophet (sa) were martyred defending their posts. The way was now open for Khalid as he led an attack down upon the unsuspecting Muslims who were busy dividing the spoils of war. Ikrima observed Khalid's actions and rallied his men to come to Khalid's assistance and joined him on the battlefield. Chaos reigned as the unbelievers charged forward on their horses shouting the names of their gods in defiance and the advantage started to slip away from the Muslims. When some of the Muslims saw the onslaught they became filled with fear and fled to the safety of the mountain despite the Prophet's order to return and help their ailing companions to fight.

WAHB

The Muslims started to loose ground rapidly and were now being forced to retreat to the mountain where the Prophet (sa) and his close companions were stationed. Fear for the Prophet's safety was paramount in the heart of many. Wahb and Harith from the tribe of Muzaynah were the first to reach him and rallied to his side followed by other warriors who took up their bows and kept the unbelievers at bay with volleys of arrows. Among the believers who took up their bows in defense of the Prophet (sa) were the ladies Umm Sulaym, Nusaybah and Umm Umara as well as several other ladies that had now joined them. Suddenly, the Prophet (sa) noticed a party of unbelievers riding towards them on the left-hand side. The Prophet (sa) asked, "Who will take these on?" Without hesitation, Wahb engaged them and shot his arrows with such accuracy and speed that the unbelievers were forced to retreat. No sooner than Wahb had rid them of their first batch of unbelievers, another batch was seen approaching. The Prophet (sa) asked again for a volunteer to take on the unbelievers and once more Wahb rose to the occasion. With the same precision and speed, Wahb dispatched volleys of arrows into the midst of the unbelievers at such a rate one might have thought it impossible for just one man to deliver such an amazing shower of arrows, and yet again the unbelievers fled. Arrows were now in short supply when a third party of unbelievers emerged and the Prophet (sa) asked once more, "Who will take these on?" Wahb offered his services once more, whereupon the Prophet (sa) told him, "Arise and rejoice, Paradise is yours." As Wahb drew his sword he said, " By Allah, I will neither spare nor wish to be spared," and so single handedly, Wahb fought the unbelievers and as he fought the Prophet (sa) supplicated for the Mercy of Allah upon him. Wahb fought valiantly paying no attention to the multiple wounds he sustained. At last the unbelievers succeeded in cornering him and so the promise of the Prophet (sa) came to be. When his companions went to bury Wahab, they found he had sustained no less than twenty spear wounds as well as multiple sword wounds.

ABU BAKR AND HIS SON ABDUL KA'BA

As the Koraysh drew closer a challenge rang throughout the air, "I am the son of Atik, who will come out against me!" The challenger referred to his ancestor and was none other than Lady Ayesha's brother Abdul Ka'ba, the son of Abu Bakr -- the only male member of his family not to enter Islam. Immediately, Abu Bakr threw down his bow and drew his sword prepared to engage his son in combat. When the Prophet (sa) saw what Abu Bakr had done, he told him compassionately to return his sword to its hilt and go back to his place and give him his company instead.

ZIYAD, SON OF SUKAIN AND THE ANSARS

Shortly after this the Koraysh cavalry penetrated the Muslim line of defense and Abu Bakr's

son retreated. The Prophet (sa) now asked his companions, "Who will sell themselves for us?" No sooner had the request been made than Ziyad, Sukain's son together with either five or seven Ansar -- their number is uncertain -- with swords in hand plunged themselves at the enemy. All were martyred except Ziyad who fell to the ground after sustaining a life-threatening wound. It was thought that Ziyad had been martyred along with his companions when the Prophet (sa) noticed Ziyad doing his best to crawl back towards them. Immediately the Prophet (sa) sent two of his companions to bring Ziyad to him. Gently, the companions picked Ziyad up, brought him to the Prophet (sa) and laid him down with his head resting on the Prophet's foot whilst the Angel of Death took away his martyred soul.

THE STONE

Due to the increased deterioration of their situation, Ali, Talha, Abu Dujanah and Zubair, who had fought at front line of the encounter since its beginning, started to fear for the Prophet (sa) and decided to fight their way back to him. When they reached him they found that an unbeliever had managed to come within close range of the Prophet (sa) and hurled a sharp stone at him. The stone had struck the Prophet (sa) on his lower lip, chipped a tooth and blood flowed from the wound. The Prophet (sa) assured his companions that he was all right and that there was no need for concern, so all except Talha, who had now fainted on account of the amount of blood he had lost during the hostilities, returned to the battlefield. However, his condition was only momentary and the Prophet (sa) asked Abu Bakr, who was Talha's cousin, to tend to his needs. Sa’ad from the tribe of Zuhra and Harith from the tribe of Khazraj took Talha's place on the battlefield. Together they fought with all their might and gained some ground. However, their gain was short lived and once more the Koraysh and their allies advanced.

THE INJURY OF THE PROPHET (sa)

The fighting around the Prophet (sa) intensified. Abu Dujanah now protected the Prophet (sa) using his back as a shield and had been hit by many arrows. The reputation of Abu Talha, step-father of Anas, as an excellent archer had been well tried that morning, he had fired so many arrows that three bows lay broken on the ground, now, with his shield he did his very best to protect the Prophet's face from injury. During the turmoil of the hostilities, with arrows falling like rain from the sky, an unbeliever made his way undetected through the Prophet's guards. The man was Abdullah, Kami'ah's son, a warrior of repute from a distant branch of the Koraysh, responsible for the martyrdom of many a Muslim that day. To everyone's surprise he now called out, "Where is Muhammad, may I not survive if he survives!" Just then, he caught sight of the Prophet (sa) and charged towards him brandishing his sword in the air and smote the Prophet (sa) on his helmet with such a forceful blow that the links on either side of his helmet dug deeply into his cheeks and for a moment he fell stunned to the ground as Abdullah, made a quick retreat. But before he got away Umm Umara managed to strike Abdullah, whereupon he struck back and she sustained a major injury to her shoulder, however, he remained unharmed as he wore a double suit of armor. Nusaybah also fought

alongside Umm Umara but remained unscathed. When the companions saw the extent of his injuries they became very distraught and exclaimed, "If only you would supplicate for a curse against them!" But the Prophet (sa) turned to them and said in his every caring and gentle manner, "I was not sent to curse, rather I was sent to invite and as a mercy." Such was his mercy and forbearance toward them that he supplicated for those who opposed him saying, "O Allah, guide my tribesmen because they do not know." When Omar heard the Prophet's reply he remarked, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), may my mother and father be your ransom! Noah supplicated against his people when he said, 'My Lord, do not leave a single unbeliever upon the earth.' If you had supplicated for a curse like that, all of us would have been destroyed. Your back has been trodden upon, your face bloodied and your tooth broken, and yet you decline to say anything other than good." Once again we are given a glimpse into our beloved Prophet's excellent character. He could have remained silent and done nothing but he chose otherwise. He pardoned them, then supplicated for their guidance and pleaded for them because they did not understand. And so another part of the Prophet's vision had been fulfilled -- the dent in his sword -- which he explained would be a wound against his person. Talha had tried to deflect the blow away from the Prophet (sa) and in doing so the fingers of one hand sustained such a harsh blow that it is reported that either his fingers were severed or that he lost the use of his fingers on one hand. Shammas from the tribe of Makzum now stood in front of the Prophet (sa) and fought with outstanding bravery against a fresh onslaught until he fell whereupon another companion took his place. A short while before, when the unbelievers had seen the Prophet (sa) fall they raised the cry: "Muhammad is dead!" and proceeded to exalt their gods. The cry had a devastating effect on the Muslims and many despaired. Mus'ab, Umair's son, the standard bearer of the Prophet (sa) bore a slight resemblance to the Prophet (sa), and was martyred by Abdullah, Kami'ah's son. In the chaos of the fighting it was thought that it was the Prophet (sa) himself who had martyred, and yet again the mistaken cry rang out that the Prophet (sa) had been martyred. Despair engulfed the hearts of many Muslims as they thought their Prophet (sa) had been taken from them. The Muslims were devastated by the misinformation and in their suspended state of paralysis soon found themselves almost completely surrounded by unbelievers, but they continued to fight for the sake of the truth the Prophet (sa) had entrusted to them. Once again, Ali fought courageously and put many to the sword, but as he fought he looked constantly for the Prophet (sa) as he did not believe the rumor. Such was Omar's despondency that he had thrown down his sword. The uncle of Anas, ibn Nadr chanced to see him and asked what he was doing. Omar replied, "Is there any reason to fight; the Messenger of Allah (sa) is no longer with us." Ibn Nadr was horrified by the news and exclaimed, "Life is not worth living now that he is no more!" and rushed off into the hostilities and was martyred.

THE RETREAT

Despite their bravery, many believers lay martyred on the field of Uhud; as for the survivors, their ammunition was almost spent. Now, the believers were in retreat and as they made their way higher up the slopes of Uhud the hostilities started to subside as the Koraysh deemed the day to be theirs. In relation to the size of the Koraysh army there was only a minimal loss of

life, although hardly any of their men or horses had been left unscathed and a great number of men sustained very severe wounds.

YAMAN AND THABIT

When news of the Muslim's distressful circumstances reached the fortresses of Medina, Yaman and Thabit, who had been left behind to protect the women and children armed themselves and sped with all haste to Uhud. Such was the confusion on the battlefield that when Thabit arrived he was mistaken for a Koraysh ally and set upon by Muslims. When Hudhayfah saw that his father, Thabit, being attacked he called out to his assailants that he was one of them but his voice was drowned under the clamor of the fighting and his father fell to friendly swords. It was indeed a very sad event but Hudhayfah was not the sort of person to bear malice against his father's unintentional assailants, rather he would mercifully say, "Muslims, may Allah forgive this sin of yours." Later when the Prophet (sa) heard of the sad occurrence he offered to pay blood-money on behalf of the Muslims, however Hudhayfah waived his right.

THE VALLEY

Prophet Muhammad (sa) had only been incapacitated for a brief moment. Now, in the light of the present situation he deemed it best that he and his companions should reposition themselves at the entrance of the valley overlooking the Koraysh camp so that they would be in a better position to monitor their movements. As the Prophet (sa) led his companions along the track, the pain caused by the chain links embedded in his cheeks became apparent upon his noble face. The small band of companions stopped for a moment and Abu Ubayda examined the injury and concluded that the only effective way to remove the links would be by extracting them with his teeth. The Prophet (sa) was agreeable and as he pulled the links out the wounds started to bleed. In an effort to cleanse the wounds, Malik, Sinan's son from the tribe of Khazraj sucked away the blood and swallowed it. Whereupon the Prophet (sa) informed his companions, "The fire cannot reach those whose blood touches my blood." Both Malik and Abu Ubayda knew that they had been greatly reward for their action. Meanwhile, Abu Sufyan observed the companions making their way along the mountain and attempted to pursue them. However, Omar who had rejoined the Prophet (sa) together with some more companions hurled rocks at him that forced him to retreat.

JUBILATION

The Prophet (sa) and his companions continued on their way to the entrance of the valley and as they did, Ka'b, Malik's son, who had recently retreated with some other Muslims to the safety of the mountain spotted them. At first he thought his eyes deceived him, he had heard and taken the rumor of the Prophet's death to be true, yet there in front of him was a figure, walking slowly, that he felt sure he recognized. As Ka'b drew nearer his heart beat faster with joy, his eyes had not deceived him and in great jubilation he cried out to the others who were

following behind, "Muslims, great news, it is the Messenger of Allah (sa)!" The Prophet (sa) gestured to Ka'b not to raise his voice and so the news that the Prophet (sa) was indeed alive spread amongst the Muslims quietly and there was great rejoicing in their hearts as they raced to join him.

THE PROPHET'S ENCOUNTER WITH UBAY

Ubayy, Khalaf's son had not as yet returned to the Koraysh camp and overheard the jubilant cry of Ka'b. Ubayy had sworn revenge that he would kill the Prophet (sa) and galloped swiftly towards him with the intent of fulfilling his oath. As he approached with sword drawn he cried out, "Muhammad, if you escape from me, may I not escape from you!" As the companions grouped themselves around the Prophet (sa) to protect him, ready to attack Ubayy, the Prophet (sa) told them to step back and before Ubayy had a chance to strike, the Prophet (sa) took hold of Harith, Simma's son's spear and slightly scratched Ubayy's neck with it. Ubayy screamed out in excruciating pain and fell from his horse then remounted and galloped back to his camp. Upon reaching the camp he was met by his nephew Safwan and other members of his tribe and croaked, "Muhammad has killed me!" However, his nephew and the others paid little attention to him as they viewed his scratch as being very minor. Instinctively, Ubayy knew that his time was running out and told them, "By Allah if he spat on me with his spittle I would die." The Koraysh were not inclined to pay much attention to Ubayy's scratch, nor did they incline to take the news that the Prophet (sa) was alive seriously, however, the seed of doubt had been sown. Ubayy's fear proved to be right. Death was soon to overtake him on their return journey to Mecca at a place called Sarif.

THE MIDDAY PRAYER

When the misinformation reached Medina that the Prophet (sa) had been killed, Lady Fatima made haste to Uhud and caught up with them as the Prophet's party was about to reach the entrance of the valley. Lady Fatima was greatly relieved to find her father alive and only wounded, and thanked Allah for his safety. Meanwhile, Ali went in search of water and came cross a small pool of water trapped in the crevices of the rocks. Using his shield as a container he scooped up some water and brought it back to the Prophet (sa) to quench his thirst. However, the water was stale and odorous, so the Prophet (sa) declined to drink from it, whereupon Lady Fatima used it to wash away the blood from his face. The wounds continued to bleed and so in attempt to stop the bleeding a piece of matting was scorched and placed over the wounds whereupon the bleeding ceased. The Prophet (sa), every anxious for the safety of his companions, felt that they were too exposed to take their rest at the entrance of the valley so he ordered his companions to climb to higher ground. There was no easy way up the mountain slope so the Prophet (sa) started to raise himself up to one of its ledges. Despite Talha's multiple wounds, when he saw what the Prophet (sa) was doing, he bent down and lifted the Prophet (sa) up so that he could more easily reach the ledge, whereupon the Prophet (sa) announced, "Whosoever wishes to look upon a martyr walking upon the earth should look at Talha, the son of Ubayd Allah." It was now midday and the Prophet (sa) and

some of his injured companions sat as he led them in prayer, then they took turns to either rest or stand on guard.

HEALING MIRACLES

Amongst the many miraculous healings at Uhud were those of Katada, Kulthum and Abdullah. During the encounter Katada engaged An-Numan in combat. As they fought Katada was struck so severely that his eye-ball came out of its socket and hung down up his cheek. When the fighting died down Katada made his way back to the Prophet (sa) whereupon the Prophet (sa) took pity on him and supplicated as he place his eye-ball back into its socket. From that time onward Katada would be heard telling his companions that the eye restored by the Prophet (sa) had the strongest vision. An arrow aimed at Kulthum, the son of Al Hussain severely pierced his throat. When the Prophet (sa) saw what had happened he supplicated then blew his saliva upon the wound and his throat healed instantly. Abdullah, Unays' son sustained a severe wound to his head, once again the Prophet (sa) supplicated and blew his saliva upon the wound and it healed. When Abdullah told his companions about the miraculous healing he would add, "It never turned septic!"

THE KORAYSH CAMP

As the Prophet (sa) and his companions took their rest, many of the Koraysh picked their way through the dead on the battlefield searching for the Prophet's body whilst others either buried their dead or tended to the wounded. They had lost only twenty-two of their men however, their casualties, both human and animal were substantial. Wahshi was not content just to let Hamza's body rest on the battlefield. Now that the fighting was over he returned to his body, ripped open his belly and gouged out his liver then took it to Hind demanding, "What will I receive for killing the one who killed your father!" Excitedly Hind replied, "All my share of the spoils of war!" With that, Wahshi presented Hamza's liver to her which she snatched from him, and to fulfill her oath of hatred towards Hamza bit a piece out of it, chewed, swallowed some and spat the remainder out. Then she demanded to be taken to Hamza's body and upon reaching it, like a savage, she cut off his nose and ears. From that day onward she was often referred to as 'Jigar Khwar' - the liver eater. Other Koraysh women delighted in similar barbaric activities, all but one of the bodies were savagely mutilated. The one that escaped further mutilation was that of Hanzalah. His father, who had fought alongside the Koraysh, pleaded with them to leave his body alone and so his body was left where it lay. Hanzalah lay near the mutilated bodies of his relatives, Hamza and Abdullah, Jahsh's son. When it was time for their burial the companions remarked upon the serenity that radiated from his face and commented that his hair remained wet from the washing of the angels.

THE REACTION OF THE KORAYSH ALLIES

When those that had allied themselves with the Koraysh against the Prophet (sa) witnessed

the barbaric actions of the Koraysh many were appalled. Hulays, from one of the tribes of Kinanah was particularly repulsed when he observed Abu Sufyan standing over Hamza's already grossly mutilated body, driving his spear into his mouth saying, "Taste this you rebel!" In horror, Hulays cried out, "Sons of Kinanah, can this be the chief of the Koraysh doing such a thing to his dead cousin!" Abu Sufyan was annoyed that he had been caught and asked him not to tell of it. On account of the Koraysh not being able to find the body of the Prophet (sa) many began to believe Ubayy, however, they had not discounted the matter of his death completely as there remained the possibility that his body lay somewhere on the slopes of Mount Uhud itself.

THE SEARCH FOR HAMZA'S BODY

Later that day, Harith, As-Simmah's son, was sent by the Prophet (sa) to search for Hamza's body. When he came across it he was so shaken by his condition that he just stood there transfixed, staring over him for a long time unable to comprehend how anyone could have acted in such a barbaric manner. When Harith did not return, the Prophet (sa) sent Ali to look for him and together they returned to the Prophet (sa) whereupon Harith and Ali lead him to Hamza's body. As the Prophet (sa) gazed down at him his heart overflowed with great sorrow and anger, and said, "I have never felt more anger than that which I feel now. Next time when Allah gives me victory over the Koraysh, I shall mutilate seventy of their dead." Shortly after this a Revelation was sent down saying:

"If you punish, let your punishment be proportionate to the punishment you received. But if you are patient, it is better for the patient. Be patient; Yet your patience is only by the help of Allah. Do not grieve for them (the unbelievers), Nor distress yourself because of their devising. Allah is with the cautious and those who do good." Koran 16:126-128

After receiving these verses the Prophet (sa) withdrew his intention and forbade mutilation.

THE BELIEVING LADIES

Whilst the Koraysh womenfolk were engrossed in their barbaric revenge, Ladies Fatima, Umm Sulaym and Um Salit tended to the wounds of the believers and brought them water. By now several ladies had set out from Medina to nurse the wounded amongst whom was Saffiyah, the sister of Hamza. When the Prophet (sa) learned of her arrival he told her son, Zubayr, not to let her see her brother's body. However, Saffiyah went to the Prophet (sa) and told him that she knew of her brother's martyrdom and that his sacrifice was not very great, for she remembered well the promise of Allah and His Prophet (sa) to those martyred in His Name. When the Prophet (sa) saw the depth of her faith he permitted her to see her brother's corpse. When she came across the remains of his poor body the only words she uttered were those from the Koran:

"We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return." Koran 2:156

and supplicated for his soul.

THE LOVE OF AN ANSARI LADY

When the news reached an Ansari lady that not only her father had been martyred but also her husband and son, she became patient. However, when she heard the misinformation that the Prophet (sa) had been taken from them it consumed her every thought and she put aside her own personal loss and made straight for Uhud. When she saw the Prophet (sa) and realized the report was false, she was so overwhelmed with joy that she exclaimed, "With you amongst us, our personal loss is insignificant." Such was the deep love and devotion of the early companions for Prophet Muhammad (sa) that their own welfare and matters were always a distant second to his.

IN SEARCH OF THE PROPHET (sa)

As the Koraysh prepared to break camp they loaded the meager spoils of war they had gained during the encounter onto the camels in readiness for their return to Mecca. Whilst the Koraysh busied themselves with their final preparations, Abu Sufyan, who was anxious to learn whether or nor the Prophet was dead or alive, rode out alone on his horse toward the mountain. Upon reaching it he drew his horse to a halt and looking up in the direction where the Muslims had last been seen called out: "Exaltations to Hubal, may your religion prevail!" When the Prophet heard this he instructed Omar to reply: "Allah is the Greatest, Exalted in Majesty. We are not equal. Our martyred are in Paradise -- your dead are in the Fire." Obediently, Omar arose, went to the ledge of the mountain and called out the words of the Prophet. Abu Sufyan recognized Omar's voice and called up to him: "Omar, in the Name of Allah, I entreat you, is Muhammad dead?" Whereupon Omar replied: "By Allah, no! Even now he hears what you are saying!" Strange as it may seem, Abu Sufyan replied: "I believe you, your word is truer than that of Abdullah, Kami'ah's son." Then he cried out: "May Badr be our meeting place next year!" When the Prophet heard this he sent another of his companions to the ledge with the message: "That is a confirmed agreement between us." When Abu Sufyan returned to his army he found them assembled on the far side of the valley awaiting his order to march. They set out in a southerly direction and it was feared that they might now march on Medina. With this in mind the Prophet (sa) asked for a volunteer to follow the army and bring back word of their movements. Seventy Muslims volunteered including Abu Bakr and Zubayr, however it was Sa’ad from the tribe of Zuhrah who was chosen. Before he departed the Prophet (sa) wisely informed him, "If they are leading their horses and riding their camels they are destined for Mecca, however, if they are riding their horses and leading their camels they are destined for Medina. By Him in whose Hand is my soul, if that is their aim, I will overtake and fight them." Sa’ad wasted no time and climbed down the mountain slope, mounted the Prophet's horse and set out upon his mission.

THE MARTYR WHO NEVER OFFERED AN OBLIGATORY PRAYER

Amongst the mortally wounded was Usayrim, a man from Medina. When the Ansars came across him they were indeed very surprised to find him there. Many were the times that they had spoken to him about Islam but he had always been hesitant to embrace it saying, "If only I could be sure it was true I would not hesitate." Gently, the Ansars inquired what had brought him to Uhud and asked on which side he had fought. Usayrim, who was by now very weak, told them that he had fought along with them and when they asked why he had done so he replied that it was for Islam because in his heart he believed in the Oneness of Allah and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (sa). As his frail voice weakened Usayrim told his companions that earlier that morning he had armed himself with is sword and set off for Uhud to join the Messenger of Allah (sa) and had fought until he fell. Shortly after this the Angel of Death took away his soul as his companions stood at his side. When the companions told the Prophet (sa) about Usayrim, he informed them that Usayrim was among those that entered Paradise and in the years that followed Usayrim became known as the believer who entered Paradise without offering even one of the obligatory prayers.

GOOD NEWS

Meanwhile, Sa'ad had ridden as swiftly as he could and was now in sight of the Koraysh and it gladdened his heart when he saw the Koraysh leading their horses and riding their camels, and so he sped back to the Prophet (sa) to convey the good news. In the years which were to follow, Amr, who had fought with the Koraysh at Uhud but later converted to Islam said, "We heard of ibn Ubayy's return to Medina with one third of the Prophet's army together with other men from the tribes of Khazraj and Aws and on that account we were unsure whether or not they would return and attack. Many of our men were wounded and most of our horses had been injured by arrows, that is why we decided to return to Mecca.

THE BURIAL OF THE MARTYRED

The bodies of the martyred were laid to rest in graves dug near the place where Hamza had fallen, some were buried alone, whereas others were buried together -- Hamza and Abdullah, Jubair's son were among those buried together. Such was their poverty that there was scarcely enough cloth to suffice as a complete shroud for any of them. If their head was covered their feet remained uncovered, and if their feet were covered their head remained uncovered. In order that they should be covered, fragrant grasses were used to shroud the uncovered limbs. With compassion and tenderness, Prophet Muhammad (sa) told his companions that the bodies of the martyred were not to be washed in the customary Islamic manner before burial. Then he gave his companions the good news that on the Day of Judgement the martyrs will be raised, without pain, with their wounds bleeding and that although the color will be that of blood there will be no odor of blood at all as it have been replaced with the delicate fragrance of musk. Under the guidance of the Prophet (sa) the

martyrs were buried in pairs and at each interment he would inquire which of the two knew the most of the Koran by heart, whereupon the most knowledgeable was placed in the grave first. Even in death the Prophet (sa) was just and never one to show disrespect. And it was revealed:

"Among the believers there are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah. Some have fulfilled their vow dying, and others await, unyielding to change, so that Allah will recompense the truthful for their truthfulness and punish the hypocrites if He will, or turn again to them. Surely, Allah is the Forgiver and the Most Merciful." Koran, Ch:33:23-24

THE MARTYRED FAMILY OF HIND, WIFE OF AMR

During the burial preparations, the Prophet (sa) asked his companions to search for the bodies of Amr, Jamuh's son and Abdullah the father of Jabir so that they might be buried together. The two men had been very close to one another during their lifetime and the Prophet (sa) thought it appropriate that they should rest together, however, their bodies could not be found. Hind, Amr's wife lost not only her husband but her son Khallad together with her brother Abdullah and wished to take them back to Medina for burial. As she made her way with her martyred family home to Medina her mounts suddenly stopped and refused to go any further. She tried repeatedly to get them to walk but when they still refused she turned them around whereupon they started to walk back from whence they came. When she reached the battlefield she went to the Prophet (sa) and told him what had happened whereupon he gently told her that it was the will of Allah that she returned to bury them there and gave her the good news that they were all together in Paradise. When Hind heard this, her heart was content and she asked the Prophet (sa) to supplicate that she might also join them there.

THE MIRACULOUS MEAL

It had been a very exhausting day and food was in extremely short supply, in fact there was only sufficient food to suffice one man. The Prophet (sa) asked for what little food there was to be brought to him, then supplicated saying, "O Allah" and all ate from the portion until they were replete.

CHAPTER 72 THE RETURN TO MEDINA

The Prophet (sa) and his companions reached Medina at sunset and made their way to the Mosque to offer the evening prayer after which they retired to their homes to tend to their multiple wounds and rest. Very few of the Muslims escaped with minor injuries. When the Prophet (sa) entered his home he asked Lady Fatima to wash away the blood from his sword saying, "Wash the blood from this my daughter, for by Allah it has served me well this day." Ali also handed his sword to Lady Fatima and asked the same, then they Prophet (sa) turned to Ali and said, "You fought well as did Sahl, Hunayf's son and Abu Dujanah." When the time

for the night prayer arrived, Bilal made the call to prayer but the Prophet (sa), overcome by deep sleep, did not hear it and slept on. His family did not wish to wake him so later when he awoke he offered his prayer alone. There was always the possibility that the Koraysh would change their plan, turn and march on Medina and so the two Sa’ads together with others from the tribes of Aws and Khazraj took it in turn to stand guard outside the Mosque.

REACTION OF THE UNBELIEVERS

Needless to say, those who did not wish the Prophet (sa) or the Muslims well were delighted with the news and spared them no sympathy, rather, they spoke ill of the Prophet (sa) and mocked him saying, "Muhammad is no more than a seeker of kingship! There has never been a prophet who faced such a reversed situation, even he has been wounded -- so were his companions!" When these sayings reached the ears of Omar he was infuriated and went straight to the Prophet (sa) to ask his permission to put the perpetrators to the sword. However, the Prophet (sa) in his mercy, forbade him to take such action saying, "Allah will make His religion prevail, and He will empower His Prophet." Then he consoled Omar saying, "O son of Khattab, indeed the Koraysh will never again take from us like this, we will greet the Corner." The latter comment referred to the Black Stone placed in the wall of the Ka'ba.

CHAPTER 73 THE DAY AFTER UHUD

Before sunrise the next day, the Prophet (sa) went to the Mosque to offer the early morning prayer with his companions. He told Bilal that after the prayer he would make the announcement that they were to prepare themselves to ride out in pursuit of the Koraysh, however, the deserters were not to be permitted to accompany them. Those that had been able to attend the prayer in the Mosque returned to their fellow tribesmen who had offered their prayer at home on account of their wounds and informed them of the announcement. With the exception of two, none offered an excuse to remain behind. The two that remained were Shammas who had sustained a fatal, paralyzing blow as he defended the Prophet (sa) and Malik who had also been fatally wounded and was now being cared for by his family. Shammas had migrated from Mecca and had no family members to tend to him in Medina so he had been taken to Lady Ayesha's apartment where Lady Umm Salamah, who was from Shammas's tribe, asked the Prophet (sa) to permit her to nurse him. Before the Prophet (sa) left, he informed his household that when Shammas' soul was taken from him he was to be buried with the other martyrs at Uhud and not in Medina. In the meantime, Jabir whose father had just been martyred, went to the Prophet (sa) to entreat him to let him accompany them. He told the Prophet (sa) that it had been his wish to accompany his father to Uhud, however, on account of his father's vision which foretold his martyrdom, his father asked him to remain behind to look after his seven young sisters, and on this account the Prophet (sa) agreed to let him go with them. When Bilal announced that they were going to pursue the enemy he had not mentioned the time of departure so Talha went to the Mosque to make inquiries. When he reached the Mosque he saw the Prophet (sa) already robed in his armor mounted on his horse

with his visor pulled down over his face, and so he returned home in haste to get ready. Very soon after, the believers gathered together outside the Mosque. As they lined up the Prophet (sa) gazed upon the severely wounded tribe of Salimah. When he saw their loyalty and willingness to obey him in spite of their wounds, he was deeply touched and supplicated, "O Allah, have mercy upon the children of Salimah."

THE BONFIRES OF HAMRA AL ASAD

The unbelievers camped at Rawha, which lies some eight miles outside Medina, to tend their wounded. Abu Sufyan was not altogether satisfied with the victory of the day before and wished that he had ordered his men to fight on until the Prophet (sa) and the Muslims were all dead. Medina was in easy reach of his army and he pondered upon the merit of leading a further attack. As Abu Sufyan rested, the Prophet (sa) and his companions reached Hamra Al Asad, which is but a couple of miles away from Rawha. News that Abu Sufyan was nearby was brought to the Prophet (sa) who now ordered his companions to gather all the wood they could possibly find and make a series of bonfires, for he was a great strategist. When night fell, Prophet Muhammad (sa) ordered the bonfires to be lit and soon their blaze was seen by Abu Sufyan and his army. It was a sight that struck terror into their hearts for no less than five hundred bonfires had been lit sending flames dancing high into the night air. Abu Sufyan feared that the Prophet (sa) had succeeded in rallying not only the deserters but also a great number of supporters. The matter was of great concern to him as most of his men were wounded and their mounts weakened by injury. In the meantime, Ma'bab, a chieftain from the tribe of Khuza who inclined toward the Prophet (sa) and the Muslims went to visit the Prophet (sa) in his camp. He was greatly impressed by the Prophet (sa) and made up his mind to help him in whichever way he could, so he went to Abu Sufyan's camp. When he reached Abu Sufyan, Abu Sufyan became fearful as he told him, "All of Medina have come out to support Muhammad, even those that turned back before the encounter!" Ma'bab's news confirmed Abu Sufyan's suspicion as he viewed the blaze of bonfires, for he had no reason to doubt the veracity of Ma'bab's news as he knew he was not a Muslim. So, Abu Sufyan ordered his army to break camp and march back to Mecca as he was not prepared to risk a further encounter and nor yet risk humiliation. As Abu Sufyan and his men returned to Mecca they were met by riders from Abdul Kays on their way to Medina to purchase supplies. Abu Sufyan stopped them and asked them to go to the Prophet (sa) with the promise that he would load their camels with raisins if they delivered his message. The riders agreed, so Abu Sufyan told them, "Tell Muhammad that we are resolved to engage him and his companions again. But next time we will make sure to rid ourselves of them completely!" Prophet Muhammad (sa) and the believers were still resting at Hamra Al Asad when the riders approached and delivered the message. The Prophet (sa) responded with a verse from the Koran that reads:

" ... Allah is sufficient for us. He is the Best Guardian." Koran 3:173

The danger had passed and the Prophet (sa) out of concern and mercy for his companions sent a message to them telling them that they were to remain in the camp for three more

days in order to recuperate. During this time Sa’ad Ubadha's son, returned to Medina and arranged for a herd of camels to be loaded with dates and driven to the camp. When they arrived some of the camels were slaughtered so that there was a plentiful supply of meat to strengthen the Muslims.

RETURN TO MEDINA

It was now Thursday and the Prophet (sa) with his companions returned to Medina and learned that both Shammas and Malik had died from their wounds. In accordance with the instructions of the Prophet (sa) the body of Shammas had been taken to Uhud and buried in the company of his fellow martyrs. When the Prophet (sa) learned that Malik had been buried in Medina he told his family to re-bury him at Uhud and so he was mercifully laid to rest with his companions.

A TIME FOR MOURNING

As the Prophet (sa) passed the homes of the Ansar tribes of Abdul Ashhai and Zafar his eyes filled with tears as he heard the sound of women gently weeping and mourning the loss of their beloved ones and said, "There are no women to mourn for Hamza." Sa’ad Mu'adhs son overheard the Prophet's remark and asked the womenfolk of his tribe to go to the Mosque and mourn for Hamza, this they did and after a while the Prophet (sa) thanked them, then supplicated for them and told them to return home.

THE DEBT OF ABDULLAH

Due to his circumstances, Abdullah, Jabir's father, had for the past two years, taken several loans from his Jewish neighbors. No sooner had Abdullah's creditors learned of his death they wasted no time in pressing Jabir to settle the matter. There was very little to offer, however, there was the harvest of his father's date palms which Jabir hoped would satisfy them, but all refused saying the harvest was insufficient. The Prophet (sa) was concerned when he learned of Jabir's predicament went to him immediately and asked him to request his creditors to come and see him. The creditors arrived and the Prophet (sa) supplicated to Allah, whereupon each creditor, to their absolute amazement, received dates equal to the repayment of Abdullah's debt. They were even more astonished when they observed the remaining amount of dates equaled that of Abdullah's usual annual crop, yet their hearts remained hardened.

THE JUMAH PRAYER

It was Friday, and the time had come to offer the congregational Jumah prayer. As the companions arrived they seated themselves on the ground in rows and waited for the Prophet (sa) to enter and give the sermon. Before Uhud, Abdullah, Ubayy's son, had always been respected by the people of Medina and consequently had been afforded a much coveted

position in the front line of prayer. It had been his practice since the Prophet's arrival in Medina to stand up before the Jumah prayer and say, "O people, this is the Messenger of Allah (sa). Allah has honored and raised you by him!" However, this time when he stood up to make his pronouncement before the prayer some of the companions tugged at his robe saying, "Sit down, you enemy of Allah! You are not worthy of this after what you did." Abdullah was numb to the seriousness of his desertion and felt as if he had been treated badly, so he left the prayer line stepping over the heads of the congregation saying, "One would suppose I had done something terrible, I only got up to strengthen his position!" As he reached the door of the Mosque and Ansar was entering and asked him why he was leaving whereupon he repeated what he had just said so the Ansar advised, "Go back and let the Messenger of Allah (sa) ask for your forgiveness." Steeped in blind pride, Abdullah refused saying, "By Allah, it is not necessary for him to do so!"

CHAPTER 74 REVELATIONS CONCERNING UHUD

A few days after the engagement, the Prophet (sa) received several verses concerning various aspects of the battle and its participants. One such verse spoke of previously unknown frailty of the tribes of Salamah and Haritha who had and one point considered desertion but Allah turned to them in His Mercy and strengthened them so that they fought with great valor against the unbelievers.

"Two parties of you were about to fail, though Allah was their Guardian, and in Allah believers put all their trust." Koran 3:122

When the tribe of Haritha heard the Revelation they went to the Prophet (sa) and told him that they thought they were one of the two parties referred to in the verse and that it had been indeed been through the blessing of Allah that they had been strengthened and not turned away. Those that had fled seeking the protection of the mountain despite the Prophet's order to return to the battle were also mentioned:

"And when you were going up, and paid no heed for anyone, and the Messenger was calling you from behind; so He rewarded you with grief upon grief that you might not sorrow for what escaped you neither for what smote you. And Allah is Aware of what you do. Then, after sorrow, He sent down upon you safety. Slumber overtook a party, while another party cared only for themselves thinking of Allah thoughts that were not true, the guess of ignorance, saying: 'Have we any say in the affair?' Say: 'The entire affair belongs to Allah.' They conceal in themselves what they do not disclose to you. They say: 'If we had any say in the affair we should not have been killed here.' Say: 'Had you stayed in your homes, those of you for whom slaying was written, would have come out to their (death) beds so that Allah might try what was in your chests and that He will examine what is in your hearts.' And Allah knows the innermost of the chests." Koran 3:153-154

Regarding some of those who were eager to engage the Koraysh at Uhud rather than in Medina and then deserted it was revealed:

"Did you suppose that you would enter Paradise without Allah knowing those of you who struggled and who were patient? You used to wish for death before you met it, so you have seen it while you were looking." Koran 3:142-143

and referring to the archers that disobeyed the Prophet's instruction:

"Allah has been true to His promise towards you when you routed them by His leave until you lost heart, and quarreled about the matter, and disobeyed, after He had shown you that which you loved. Some among you wanted the world, and some among you wanted the Everlasting Life. Then He made you turn away from them in order to test you. But He has forgiven you, for Allah is Bounteous to the believers." Koran 3:152

However, regarding those who deserted the Prophet (sa) before they reached Uhud it was later revealed when they proved themselves to be believers:

"Those of you who turned away on the day when the two armies met must have been seduced by satan on account of some of what they had earned. But Allah has pardoned them. He is Forgiving and Clement." Koran 3:155

In another Revelation, Allah challenged the Muslims who had despaired when it was rumored that the Prophet (sa) was dead, saying:

"Muhammad is not except a Messenger; Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you turn about on your heels? And he who turns on his heels will not harm Allah a thing. Allah will recompense the thankful." Koran 3:144

Regarding the martyrs Abdullah, Masood's son, said that it was explained to them by the Prophet (sa) that the souls of martyrs at Uhud had been placed in the bellies of a flock of green birds that come down to the rivers in the Garden to eat of its fruits. When they return, their home is in the shade of the Throne of Allah decked with candlesticks of gold. Upon their return Allah asks them: "O My worshipers, is there anything that you wish for so that I might give you more?" To which they reply: "O our Lord, there is nothing beyond the Garden which You have given us, from which we eat as we please." Then, Allah asks them this question three times and each time the reply is the same except for the last when the martyrs add: "Except that our souls be returned to our bodies so that we might return to earth and fight for You until we are martyred again." Ibn Abbas said that one day he heard the Prophet (sa) tell his companions that the martyrs reside in a tent by a river named Barik. He told them that Barik flows by the entrance to the Garden and that their provision is brought from the Garden each day in the morning and evening.

CHAPTER 75 AFTER UHUD

Two months of peace followed the hostilities of Uhud, however, the Muslims were rightfully on their guard against a surprise attack from the Koraysh and in particular their allies from the not-so-far away tribes in the Najd. When news reached Medina that the tribe of Asad, Khuzaymah's son were planning an attack, the time had come to let it be known that even though matters had not gone as well for the Muslims at Uhud as they had at Badr, they were able to fight for their belief and right to exist. With this intent the Prophet (sa) ordered a cavalry of a hundred and fifty well-armed men to ride out under the command of Abu Salamah to engage the enemy in a surprise attack. When the time came, Abu Salamah lead the attack quickly and skillfully with the result that there was very little loss of life on either side. The unbelievers were routed and fled whilst Abu Salamah and his men returned to Medina with a large herd of camels and three herdsmen as spoils of war. The attack had further merits, not only had Medina been protected from the planned attack but their victory sent a clear message to the unbelievers that they were still very capable of defending themselves.

ABDULLAH, CHIEF OF THE TRIBE OF LEHYAN

Abdullah was the chief of the tribe of Lehyan, a branch of the Hudayl. He was a very evil man well known for his hatred of the Prophet (sa) and had succeeded to incite his tribe to take up arms against him. When news reached Medina of Abdullah's action, the Prophet (sa), rather than sending an army against the entire tribe, sent Abdullah, from the tribe of Khazraj to put an end to his name-sake. Abdullah had never seen the chieftain and asked the Prophet (sa) how he might recognize him whereupon the Prophet (sa) informed him, "When you see him, he will remind you of satan, and you will start to shudder." Upon reaching his destination Abdullah had no difficulty identifying him, for sure enough right before him stood the most evil looking man he had ever seen and he began to shudder. Without a second thought Abdullah put and end to the chieftain and escaped unharmed to Medina. Now that their chieftain was dead the majority of the tribe had little interest left in attacking the Muslims, however, the matter of revenge remained upon the mind of several tribal members.

REVENGE

Sometime after the hostilities at Uhud, the Prophet (sa) sent twelve of his companions out on reconnaissance under the command of Asim, Thabit's son. When the party arrived at Hudat, which lies between Usfan and Mecca, they were spotted and their whereabouts relayed to the tribe of Lehyan who set out in hot pursuit with approximately one hundred archers against the small band of men. Soon after Asim and his companions noticed clouds of dust rising high in the air coming directly toward them. Asim realized that he and his companions were greatly outnumbered so he ordered them to climb to higher ground where they had a better chance to defend themselves. When the enemy arrived they spread themselves out and surrounded

Asim and his companions. As Asim and his companions prepared to defend themselves, one of the unbelievers called out to them saying, "If you come down and surrender to us, your lives will be spared!" Asim did not trust them and refused saying, "We will not leave our positions to accept the promise of an unbeliever." Then he supplicated to Allah saying, "O Allah, convey our situation to Your Messenger." Seconds after, volleys of arrows flew through the air and Asim, together with all but three of his companions were martyred. When the survivors, Khubaib, Zayd, the son of Dathanah and another saw the condition of the rest of their companions they agreed to surrender with the promise that their lives would be spared, and went down to surrender.

THE THREE PRISONERS

As soon as the companions reached the bottom of the hill the unbelievers overpowered them, took the strings from their bows and bound them with it. The third companion spoke saying, "This is the first violation of your promise. By Allah, I will not accompany you and will follow the example of my other companions!" The unbelievers pulled him and tried to drag him along with them but he resisted with all his might so they martyred him and took Khubaib and Zayd back with them to Mecca to be sold. Khubaib had killed Harith, Amir's son during the encounter at Badr, so when his relatives found out that he had been captured they bought him and bound him tightly in chains, and called for a family meeting to decide what they were gong to do with him. All were in agreement that they should revenge themselves by killing him, however, one of the sacred months was upon them, a time when spilling blood was forbidden, and so Harith's relatives had to wait until the passing of the sacred period to resolve the matter. Zayd had been sold to Safwan and he too decided that he would not spare his life, but like Harith's relatives he too was bound by adherence to the sacred months.

THE MERCY OF KHUBAIB

During his imprisonment Khubaib, who had been separated from Zayd, borrowed a knife from one of Harith's daughter. Shortly afterwards her young son wandered up to Khubaib and sat on his lap whilst the knife still remained in his hand. When the child's mother saw what had happened she was terrified. Khubaib, realized her great fear and asked, "Are you afraid that I would kill him? I am not capable of doing such a thing," and he sent the youngster back to his mother, for he had learned from our beloved Prophet's example that such an action was not only unjust and dishonorable, but more importantly forbidden, and there was no place for such a despicable action in Islam. From that time onward, whenever Khubaib was mentioned, the boy's mother always spoke highly of him and would often remark how she had seen Khubaib eating fresh grapes even though they were not in season and would comment, "I am sure that it was Allah who sent Khubaib food!" And these two important factors made a great impression upon her. When the time came for Khubaib and Zayd to be martyred they were taken separately to a place outside Mecca called Tan'im. When they met, they greeted each other with peace and exhorted each other to be patient. Khubaib was the first to be martyred, but before his martyrdom he requested that he be permitted to offer two units of prayer. The

unbelievers agreed and released him from his chains whereupon he offered his prayer. After its completion he turned to his captors sayings, "I would have made my prayer longer if I had not thought that you might think I was afraid of death." Then he supplicated, "O Allah, count them and kill them one by one, and do not spare any of them."

THE MARTYRDOM OF KHUBAIB AND ZAYD

Khubaib was bound to a stake and the unbelievers told him that they would spare his life if he recanted, but he refused saying, "If you were to offer me all the things in the world I would still refuse." The unbelievers tried to persuade Khubaib still further and asked, "Don't you wish that it was Muhammad in your place and that you were sitting at home!" With deep affection for the Prophet (sa), Khubaib replied, "No, I would not wish that Muhammad (sa) would even be pricked by a thorn and that I should sit at home." The unbelievers continued with their attempt to make him recant but their words fell upon deaf ears and a strong, believing heart. Khubaib wished that he could be martyred facing the direction of his beloved Ka'ba, but the unbelievers refused so he said, "If I am killed as a Muslim, I do not care on which side I fall. My death is in the Cause of Allah, and if He wills, He will bless the severed portions of my limbs." Just before they began to martyr him, he offered a final supplication saying, "O Allah, there is no man present who will take my greetings of peace to Your Messenger (sa), so convey my greetings of peace to him for me." In the crowd that had gathered there were about forty young boys whose fathers had been killed at Badr. As the Koraysh prepared to take their revenge they gave each of the boys a spear saying, "This is the one that killed your father." One by one the boys wounded Khubaib with the spears but their strength was not enough to kill him and he lingered on for an hour until the fatal wound was delivered. During his last hour he repeated over and over again the words, "There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Khubaib was finally martyred when an older man placed his hand over that of one of the boys and plunged his spear forceful into him, and so Khubaib joined Asim and his companions. Khubaib was the first Muslim to offer two units of prayer before martyrdom. As martyrdom fell upon Khubaib, the Prophet (sa) was sitting with his companions in Medina. Unseen by his companions, Angel Gabriel brought Khubaib's greeting of peace to him whereupon the Prophet (sa) replied, "And upon him be the peace and mercy of Allah," then the Prophet (sa) with sadness in his voice informed his companions that Khubaib had been martyred. Zayd's martyrdom followed soon after Khubaib's, he to offered two units of prayer and was martyred in the same manner of Khubaib.

THE SWARM OF BEES

As for Asim who had been martyred before the onset of the forbidden months, he had killed a Koraysh chieftain at Badr. When the news reached Mecca that he lay dead on the hillside, a party set off to bring back a recognizable portion of his body to satisfy their lust for revenge. However, when the unbelievers reached the hill they found that Allah had sent a swarm of bees to protect his body and so they were unable to approach him and returned to Mecca without mutilating him.

CHAPTER 76 LADY ZAYNAB, DAUGHTER OF KHUZAYMAH

At the beginning of the hostilities at Badr, Ubayda had been martyred by Utba in single combat and left behind a wife who was much younger than himself by the name of Zaynab. Zaynab was the daughter of Khuzaymah from the Bedouin tribe of Amir and well known for her generosity. She concerned herself with the welfare of the poor and would go out of her way to help them whenever she could. It was on account of her caring nature that even before she embraced Islam she was endearingly referred to as "Mother of the Poor." A year had passed since Ubayda had been martyred and Zaynab had not remarried. When the Prophet (sa) proposed marriage to her she accepted and they were married in the 3rd year after the migration and a room was added onto the outside of the Mosque for her. Through his marriage a closer relationship between the Muslims and her tribe was established.

THE VISIT OF ABU BARA

Shortly after their marriage they received a visit from Abu Bara, the elderly chieftain of Lady Zaynab's tribe. The Prophet (sa) welcome him and spoke to him of Islam, and his heart inclined toward it, although he was not as yet prepared to make a commitment. Abu Bara recognized the high principals of Islam, and its mortality and knew its teachings would benefit his tribe so he asked the Prophet (sa) to send some of his companions to them so that they might learn. The Prophet (sa) agreed to the request but at the same time expressed his concern for the safety of his companions journey, for Abu Bara's tribe lay beyond the land belonging to the hostile tribes of Sulaym and Ghatafan, and it was this that caused his concern. After Abu Bara's assurance that the companions would travel in safety under his protection, the Prophet (sa) agreed and appointed Mundhir, Amir's son from the tribe of Khazrah to lead the delegation. As a matter of precaution, the Prophet (sa) sent one of his companions with a letter on in advance to Abu Bara's tribe informing them of their chieftain's request for the presence of the delegation. Forty companions, known for their piety and knowledge, were chosen and set off across the desert on their mission.

THE TREACHERY OF ABU BARA'S NEPHEW

During Abu Bara's absence, his ambitious nephew, who longed for tribal leadership, courted his fellow tribesmen in an attempt to overthrow their aging chieftain. When the Prophet's companion arrived at their village, Abu Bara's nephew set upon him and martyred him. Then he called upon the rest of the tribe to do the same to the companions when they arrived. The majority of the tribe remained loyal to Abu Bara and when his nephew realized they were not going to follow his orders he sent a message to the tribe of Sulaym informing them that the Prophet's companions would soon journey across their land. The tribe of Sulaym, always anxious to take revenge, lost not time and set off in search of the unsuspecting companions.

THE ATTACK OF THE TRIBE OF SULAYM

At the well of Maunah, the companions stopped to rest whilst Harith, As-Simmah's son and Amr from the tribe of Kinanah went off to tend to the camels. It was during this time that tribesmen from the Sulaym caught up with them and relentlessly attacked until they lay martyred by the well. No sooner had the camels been settled and left to graze Harith and Amr made their way back to the well. As they approached, to their great distress, they noticed birds of prey circling above the well and fear for their companions engulfed their hearts. They approached the well with caution and to their great distress their fear was realized as their eyes gazed upon their martyred companions laying where they had fallen whilst the Sulaym tribesmen stood around talking to one another. Amr thought it was best to return to Medina with the news, but Harith told him, "I cannot hold myself back from fighting here where Mundhir was martyred," whereupon he charged among the Sulaym and killed two of them. Amr joined in the fight and both were taken prisoner. Harith's captors asked him what he thought they should do with him, to which he replied, "Take me to the body of Mundhir, give me a weapon and let me fight." Strange as it may seem, his captors agreed and Harith killed two more of their tribesmen before he himself was martyred.

THE MISSING MARTYR

As for Amr, the Sulaym decided to release him and let him live, but before doing so they asked him to tell them the names of those whom they had killed. As Amr walked among his martyred companions he informed them of both their name and lineage, then someone asked if any were missing and Amr replied, "I did not find Amir, Fuhayrah's son, the freed man of Abu Bakr." Whereupon the tribesman inquired what kind of position Amir had held amongst them. Amr replied, "He was among the best of us, one of the Prophet's earlier companions." Upon hearing this the tribesman turned to Amr and said, "Shall I tell you what happened to him?" then called for a fellow tribesman named Jabar. Jabar had been the one to martyr Amir and related how he had thrust his spear into Amir's back with such force that it had gone straight through his chest, and that with his last breath Amir had cried out, "By Allah, I have triumphed!" Jabar told Amr that he was surprised to hear such words from a dying man, and as he removed his spear from his chest, he witnessed Amir's body being lifted gently into the air and taken away by unseen hands high into the sky until it was no longer visible. Amr explained that by "triumph" Amir had referred to his attainment of Paradise. When Jabar heard this he embraced Islam. Just before Amr returned to Medina he was told that his aggressors had learned of their presence from one of Abu Bara's tribe. Amr was grieved by what appeared to be a treacherous act of the tribe and with a heavy heart set off for Medina. As he journeyed, Amr came across two men from Abu Bara's tribe. Amr was unaware of the attempt to overthrow Abu Bara and that most of his fellow tribesmen had distanced themselves from the treachery of his nephew. Supposing the tribesmen were among those responsible for the loss of his companions, Amr attacked and killed both of them. It was a regrettable incident, both men were in fact loyal to Abu Bara. When the Prophet (sa) learned of the martyrdom of his companions and how Amir had been taken away, he told those

around him that it was the angels that had taken him to Illiyyun which is among the highest of residences in Paradise. As for the dead tribesmen, the Prophet (sa) was deeply saddened and justly ordered blood-money to be paid to their next of kin in restitution.

SEEDS OF BELIEF

When the tribesmen of the Sulaym returned to their people they related what had happened by the well and told how they had stood in awe as Amr's body was carried away up into the sky and watched until he was no longer visible. The miraculous event was told and retold many times, and so the seeds of Islam were sown in the hearts of the tribe of Sulaym.

CHAPTER 77 A PLOT TO MURDER THE PROPHET (sa)

The matter of how to raise sufficient money to recompense the family of the two innocent dead tribesmen of Abu Bara weighed heavily upon the Prophet (sa). Now, the Jewish tribe of Nadir had entered into an agreement with the Prophet (sa) and were also friendly with Abu Bara's tribe, so the Prophet (sa) decided to go to them and ask their help. Omar and Abu Bakr accompanied the Prophet (sa) to the fortresses of the Nadir that lay on the outskirts of Medina. Upon their arrival they asked to speak with their chieftains whereupon they were taken to them and explained the reason for their visit. The chieftains appeared sympathetic and agreeable to help in the matter so they invited him and his companions to stay a little while to eat with them. The Prophet (sa) never refused an invitation and accepted whereupon several of the tribesmen including Huyay, one of their fellow chieftains excused themselves, which one could have supposed would have been to make preparations for the meal. Not long after Huyay and the others had excused themselves, unseen by anyone else, the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet (sa) and told him that Huyay and his companions were planning to kill him and that he must return home immediately. As soon as Gabriel left, without saying a word, the Prophet (sa) got up and left the gathering. The companions waited for his return and when it became evident that he was not going to return, they too left and made their way back to the Prophet's house. When the companions arrived, the Prophet (sa) told them of Gabriel's warning and described to them the manner in which the Jewish chieftains had planned to murder him. After that, the Prophet (sa) sent Muhammad, Maslamah's son back to the fortresses with a message. As Muhammad approached the fortresses the chieftains came out to meet him and Muhammad told them, "The Messenger of Allah (sa) has sent me to you and instructed me to tell you that on account of your plot to kill him, the treaty he made with you no longer exists." Then, much to their amazement he described in detail the plan they had devised, the plan of which alone they were aware. Muhammad continued to deliver the rest of the message and gave them an ultimatum saying, "The Prophet (sa) gives you ten days in which to leave Medina, whosoever remains behind after that will be killed." The Jews were deeply shocked to learn that their treachery had been exposed and who the informant was and said as a matter of bravado, "O son of Maslamah, we never thought that a man from Aws would ever bring us a message such as this!" Muhammad replied, "Hearts have changed," and

returned to the Prophet (sa).

CHAPTER 78 THE TRIBE OF NADIR DECLARE WAR

Word of the ultimatum spread through the tribe and preparations were in progress for their departure when a message was received from ibn Ubayy that promised his support and encouraged them to stay. Huyay was greatly heartened by the promise and convinced his people to stay. With high hopes, Huyay sent word to his cousins, the tribe of Krayzah, and asked them to lend their support, for he was confident that they would not let him down, and at the same time he sent word to their allies, the tribe of Ghatafan, known for their hostility towards the Prophet (sa) to come to their aid. As soon as the messages had been sent, Huyay and his tribesmen stocked their fortresses with rocks, catapults, arrows and whatever weaponry they could lay their hands on in readiness. Huyay was confident that his cousins and allies would arrived at any moment and sent his brother to the Prophet (sa) with a message that informed him they were prepared to fight. When the Prophet (sa) received the message he exclaimed: "Allah is Great," and his companions around him reiterated his exaltation -- the Prophet (sa) continued, "The Jews have declared war." Immediately, the Muslims rallied to the side of the Prophet (sa) who then handed the standard to Ali. That afternoon the Prophet (sa) and his army marched until the fortresses of the Nadir were in sight and observed that the Jews had barricaded themselves within their walls and that the settlement was now completely deserted. After the prayer had been offered, the Prophet (sa) led his companions on toward the fortresses. The Jews let loose a volley of arrows and arrows whistled through the air and so the hostilities continued up until nightfall. During the night hours, the number of the Prophet's companions increased as those who had only just learned of the Prophet's march joined them. As their numbers swelled, the Muslims were soon able to surround the fortresses and this alarmed the Jews, however, they expected their kinsmen to arrive the next day which would ease the situation. After offering the night prayer, the Prophet (sa) entrusted Ali with the command of the army and together with ten of his companions they returned to Medina. Throughout the night Ali led his brethren praising and exalting Allah, and the hours slipped away, soon the sky began to lighten, it was time to offer the Fajr prayer. There was still no sign of the help the Jews so confidently had relied upon. Unknown to Huyay and his tribe, their cousins from the tribe of Krayzah were not inclined to break their pact with the Prophet (sa). As for ibn Ubayy, the circumstances were such that he felt unable to keep his promise, and so Huyay continued to wait in vain for their arrival together with the expected support from the tribe of Ghatafan. Later on that morning after the Prophet (sa) returned to his companions and fighting broke out once more. The days passed, and Huyay's hopes turned into fear. Ten days later, the Angel Gabriel brought the Prophet (sa) a new verse:

"Whatever palm-tree you cut down or left standing upon its roots, it is by the permission of Allah, so that He might humiliate the impious." Koran 59:5

whereupon he ordered the cutting down of several highly prized date palms belonging to the

Nadir. Dates were a vital part of the Nadir's economy so when Huyay saw the trees being felled he was greatly dismayed. In the back of Huyay's mind he remembered the promise of the Koraysh to annihilate the Muslims one day and thought if he and his tribe were compelled to temporarily leave their homes they could return later, reclaim their palms and re-establish their settlement. But now the trees were being felled and he knew it would take many years to replace them which would greatly affect their livelihood. With this harsh reality on his mind. Huyay begrudgingly sent word of surrender to the Prophet (sa). The Prophet (sa) accepted but told them that they were to be expelled from their land. Even in such circumstances the mercy of the Prophet (sa) was manifested as he allowed them to take their camels and all that they could carry with the exception of weapons and armor. He was indeed generous and merciful to them for it was in his power to seize everything they owned and expel them with nothing except the clothes on their back but this was not his way. Huyay was ungrateful and not like the terms of surrender, he knew that their camels were incapable of carrying all their possessions, and then there was the matter of weapons and armor. However, his tribesmen were not in a mood to listen to him and forced him to accept. The confrontation was over and the Nadir tribesmen left their fortresses and returned home to pack as much as they could onto their camels. Once the packing had been completed their women folk adorned themselves with all their jewelry then mounted their camels laden with rugs of the finest quality. It had always been known that the tribe was extremely rich, however, it was not until that moment that the extent of their wealth was realized. With an air of defiance, in single file, the tribe of Nadir left Medina defiantly flaunting their wealth as they rode out accompanied by music. Most of the tribe decided to resettle at Khybar where they owned land, however, others preferred to journey further afield to either Jericho or southern Syria. As for the many date palms still left standing, the Prophet (sa) received a new Revelation that said:

"(A share of the spoils shall also be given) to the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their possessions, who seek the Favor and Pleasure of Allah, and help Allah and His Messenger. These are they that are truthful. And those before them who, had made their dwelling in the abode (the City of Medinah), and because of their belief love those who have emigrated to them; they do not find any (envy) in their chests for what they have been given and prefer them above themselves, even though they themselves have a need. Whosoever is saved from the greed of his own soul, They are the ones who win." Koran 59:8-9

and so in compliance with the verse, the spoils were distributed among the new immigrants and Muhajir. When the Muhajir first arrived in Medina the Ansars had generously shared their groves with their new brothers, but now even though the Muhajir had been given the groves of the Nadir, the Ansar still wished them to keep the groves they had given them.

THE END OF THE 3RD YEAR

The third year was drawing to a close, it was the year in which the Prophet (sa) had married Lady Hafsa, Omar's daughter and Lady Zaynab, daughter of Khuzaymah and Lady Umm Kulthum, the daughter of the Prophet (sa) had married Othman, Affan's son. The encounter at

Uhud had all but been lost on account of the disobedience of some of the companions who were later forgiven by Allah through their sincere repentance. After Uhud, Allah sent down verses that forbade alcohol. Now not only the consumption, production but its transportation was also forbidden. Then more recently, the treachery of the Jewish tribe of Nadir's attempt to poison the Prophet (sa) had been exposed that finally resulted in their expulsion from Medina.

CHAPTER 79 THE FOURTH YEAR

Eight months after their marriage in the 4th year after the migration, Lady Zaynab was taken ill and passed away. She was buried near the grave of the Prophet's daughter, Lady Rukiyyah, in the graveyard of Baki, may Allah be pleased with them and grant them perfect peace.

THE DEATH OF ABU SALAMAH

Abu Salamah's family were originally from Medina, from the tribe of Asad. However, they had, at one time, settled in Mecca under the sponsorship of his uncle, Abu Talib. It was there that Abu Salamah, met and married Umm Salamah, from the tribe of Mughirah, who was then eighteen years of age. From the very beginning their marriage had been a happy one, and they had been among the early converts that migrated to Abyssinia.

ALLAH ACCEPTS THE TENDER PRAYER OF ABU SALAMAH

Such was their love for each other that one day Umm Salamah told her husband that if he should die before her she would not remarry. It was a touching gesture, times were difficult, especially for a woman, so Abu Salamah told her that if this should be the case she should remarry and then supplicated saying, "May Allah grant Umm Salamah, after I am gone, a man better than myself who will neither sadden nor harm her." Several months before, during the hostilities at Uhud, Abu Salamah had been severely wounded and his wife nursed him as best she could. The wound appeared to heal and he went about his daily life, however, a deep infection lay dormant below the injury and the festering wound broken open. The infection could not be contained and soon the poison spread rapidly through his body until he passed away. Abu Salamah was a cousin of the Prophet (sa) and when he learned of his death he went straight to his house to pray for him. Upon reaching the grieving household he bent over Abu Salamah and gently closed his eye lids as he told his family, "When the soul of a person is taken away, the vision of the eye also follows it." There was great sadness in the household and tears began to flow and the Prophet (sa) consoled them saying, "Supplicate for that which is good for yourselves, because the angels say Ameen to your supplications." The Prophet Muhammad (sa) supplicated, "O Allah, forgive Abu Salamah and exalt his rank among those who are guided, and be the Guardian of those he has left behind. O Lord of the worlds, forgive him and all of us, and make his grave spacious and illumine it for him." The Prophet (sa) knew well the great bond between Umm Salamah and her husband, and understood the loss she now felt so he turned to her and told her to supplicate saying, "O Allah, forgive me

and him and give to me in return a good replacement," and so Umm Salamah offered the supplication. But deep in her heart she knew that none of the companions could ever replace Abu Salamah for he was so very loving and caring and chocked back her tears as she said, "No one could be better than Abu Salamah."

THE MARRIAGE OF MERCY THE PROPHET (sa) MARRIES LADY UMM SALAMAH

Four months after the death of Abu Salamah, the Prophet (sa) asked Umm Salamah to be his wife. Umm Salamah was completely overwhelmed and totally unprepared for the proposal and modestly said, "I am no longer young, and the mother of orphans. By nature I am a jealous person and you, O Messenger of Allah (sa) have other wives." The Prophet (sa) replied, "I am older than you; as for your jealously, I will supplicate to Allah that it is taken away from you. As for your orphaned children, Allah and His Messenger (sa) will take care of them." The sincere response of the Prophet (sa) touched Lady Umm Salamah's heart and shortly afterward, the Prophet (sa) and Lady Umm Salamah were married whereupon she lived in Lady Zaynab's apartment adjoining the Mosque.

THE BIRTH OF AL HUSSAIN

During the 4th year, Lady Fatima and Imam Ali were blessed with a second son whom the Prophet (sa) named Al Hussain. It was a joyous event and everyone gave thanks for the safe delivery of Hasan's baby brother.

CHAPTER 80 THE SECOND MEETING AT BADR

After the encounter of Uhud, Abu Sufyan had challenged the Prophet (sa) to a second encounter at Badr the following year. The months had passed quickly and the time for the challenge approached. Drought had stricken the region yet again and food for both human and livestock was in very short supply. Abu Sufyan was aware of the fact that once he and his army left Mecca the vegetation of the desert would be insufficient to support the need of his mounts and that he would be forced to take fodder with them, and that was by no means an easy task. The challenge was a matter of honor not only for Abu Sufyan but for the entire tribe of Koraysh. He knew well that if he were to fail to meet the challenge, that he himself had initiated, disgrace would fall upon him and his tribe as its news would spread throughout Arabia. As Abu Sufyan pondered over the matter, news arrived that the Prophet (sa) and his army had already begun to prepare themselves for the encounter so Abu Sufyan wasted no time in calling his fellow chieftains together to discuss the matter. Suhail, a Koraysh chieftain, was among those that attended the meeting and it so happened to Nu'aym, an influential friend with the power of persuasion from the tribe of Ghatafan, happened to be visiting him. Suhail told his fellow chieftains of Nu'aym's presence and so it was decided that they would approach him with the offer of twenty fine camels if he could persuade the Muslims to back down from their side of the challenge. Deep down in his heart Nu'aym had already started to

incline towards the message the Prophet (sa) preached, as he instinctively knew that the idols he and his tribe held as gods were nothing but the fabrication of his ancestors, however, the temptation of owning twenty fine camels swayed his reasoning and he decided to accept the challenge and set off for Medina. As Nu'aym approached the oasis outside Medina he noticed a group of Muslims so he made his way over to them and started to sow the seeds of apprehension. Nu'aym spoke with such conviction that it was hard not to believe him as he mentioned the supposedly, formidable, well-equipped army of Abu Sufyan. Nu'aym continued on to Medina where he spread his alarming tales amongst each section of the society. After each narration he would conclude with words that urged the Muslims not to go out against Abu Sufyan and conveyed his fear that not one of them would remain after the encounter. Needless to say those in opposition to the Prophet (sa) were greatly heartened by the news and not only helped to spread the tales but embellished them. Nu'aym was so convincing that a large number of Muslims inclined to his concluding remarks. When news of this reached the Prophet (sa) he was concerned, however, during a consultation with Abu Bakr and Omar, the Prophet (sa) told his companions, "I will go, even if I go alone," whereupon his companions said in support of his resolve, "Allah will support His religion; He will give strength to His Messenger." When the Muslims learned of the Prophet's intent to go alone if needed they rallied around him and completely disregarded Nuaym's rumors. Nu'aym had been so close to receiving his reward, however, it was surprisingly of little concern to him that he had failed in his mission. Like so many others he had observed the ways of the Muslims and been impressed by their conviction so much that his heart inclined still further to Islam.

THE MARCH TO BADR

Shortly after this, the Prophet (sa) and his army set off for the second encounter at Badr with fifteen hundred riding camels and ten horses. It so happened that this time of year was also the time of Badr's annual fair, a time when merchants from all over Arabia journeyed there to sell their wares, and then, perhaps, continue onto Mecca to offer their pilgrimage. Such was the strength of the Muslim's faith that many of them, despite of the challenge that loomed over them, loaded their mounts with merchandise to sell or trade at the fair.

THE DILEMMA OF ABU SUFYAN

Abu Sufyan remained reluctant to set forth for Badr, however, the matter of honor or dishonor weighed heavily upon him. In an effort to keep face, whilst quite unaware of the fact that the Prophet (sa) had already departed from Medina, Abu Sufyan called upon the other chieftains saying, "Let us set out and journey for a couple of nights, and then return. If Muhammad has not already left he will soon learn that we went out to meet him and on account of not finding him we returned home. In this way it will be counted against him and for us!"

THE FAIR AT BADR

Prophet Muhammad (sa) and his companions reached Badr five days before Abu Sufyan and the Koraysh set out from Mecca. As there was no sign or news of Abu Sufyan, the Prophet (sa) and his men continued on to the fair where they not only traded and sold their wares, but also reported the fact that Abu Sufyan had failed to keep his part of the challenge. Abu Sufyan's failure was the main topic of conversation at Badr, and soon the traders that had journeyed from all over Arabia spread the news as they traveled homeward. It was a moral victory for the Prophet (sa) and disgrace fell upon Abu Sufyan and the Koraysh. Meanwhile, in Mecca the Koraysh chieftains chided Abu Sufyan for his lack of leadership, and told him that he should never have issued the challenge in the first place. Discontent was evident among the Koraysh and they became further committed to ridding themselves of the Prophet (sa) and his followers. As for the Muslims, they returned to Medina rejoicing in the blessings Allah had sent them. As the summer's heat intensified, the fourth year drew to a close and with it came a blessed month of peace.

CHAPTER 81 THE FIFTH YEAR

The fifth year after the migration had just begun when news reached Medina that some of its neighboring tribes from the Ghatafan intended to raid their southern oasis. When the Prophet (sa) learned of the news he called upon four hundred of his followers and together they rode out to the plain of Najd in pursuit. However, they reached the plain after the Ghatafan had left.

THE BIRD AND THE ANT COLONY

One day on the expedition, the Prophet (sa) left his companions for a while. In his absence they found a red bird with two fledglings and caught them whilst their mother stood nearby flapping her wings in distress upon the sand. When the Messenger of Allah (sa) return he noticed the distraught mother bird and exclaimed, "Who has distressed this bird on account of its young -- return them to her." His mercy and respect for life was not restricted to humans for he was sent by Allah to be a mercy for all the worlds, and that included the animal kingdom. Then he noticed an ant-hill that had been set on fire and asked, "Who has set this on fire?" Meekly his companions replied that it was they that had done so whereupon the Prophet (sa) guided them telling them, "It is not right to torment with fire -- it is for Allah alone to punish with Fire."

THE CAMEL OF JABIR

On the return journey to Medina, the majority of the Prophet's companions rode on ahead whilst he and some of his close companions rode a distance behind to care for and ensure the safety of those who were unable to keep up. Jabir, whose father had been martyred at Uhud, had a camel that was old and so frail that it could not keep up with the others. It wasn't long until the Prophet (sa) caught Jabir up whereupon he inquired why he was not with the rest of

his companions so Jabir mentioned the camel's condition. The Prophet (sa) asked Jabir to make his camel kneel and then dismount and he did the same. Then he asked Jabir to hand him his riding stick whereupon the Prophet (sa) gently prodded the old camel with it and told Jabir to remount. By the blessing of Allah, a miracle occurred and the camel's strength was revived to such a degree that it ran even faster than the Prophet's camel and they continued to ride together.

THE THREAT THE HEART OF FREEDOM

The sun had reached its height and so when the Prophet (sa) and his close companions reached a valley in which thorn trees grew, he decided they would rest and each sought the shade of a different tree. As the Prophet (sa) dismounted, he took off his sword and hung it upon a branch then lay down to rest and fell asleep. Shortly after, a Bedouin named Ghawrath, Al Harith's son, came upon him, drew his sword and said in a voice that awoke him, "Do you fear me!" whereupon the Prophet (sa) answered calmly, "No". Ghawrath was surprised and demanded, "Who then will save you from me?" and the Prophet (sa) replied, "Allah," whereupon the Ghawrath's sword fell from his hand to the ground. The Prophet (sa) picked it up and asked, "Now, who will save you from me?" Ghawrath was shaken by the turn of events and pleaded, "Be a good captor," whereupon the Prophet (sa) asked, "Will you bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that I am His Messenger?" Ghawrath answered, "No, but I promise that I will neither fight against you, nor will I join those who do so." The Prophet (sa) took Ghawrath at his word, for he was never oppressive, and let him go. Ghawrath was so struck by the leniency of the Prophet (sa) that upon his return to his tribe Ghawrath announced, "I have returned to you from someone who is the best of all mankind!"

THE COMPASSION AND GENEROSITY OF THE PROPHET (sa)

It was time to continue once more on their journey and as they rode the Prophet (sa) asked Jabir if he would sell him his camel. Jabir replied that he preferred to give it to him. The Prophet (sa) declined Jabir's offer telling him that he wished to buy it from him, so Jabir asked him to name his price. In jest, the Prophet (sa) told Jabir that he would buy it for a dirham. Jabir realized the jest and in the same tone replied, appreciating that the camel was no ordinary camel as it had been blessed, said that a dirham was insufficient. And so they continued until a price of forty dirhams was reached -- which was at that time equal to an ounce of gold -- and Jabir accepted. As they continued their journey, the Prophet (sa) asked Jabir if he was married. Jabir replied that he was and that his wife had been married before. Jabir was a young man and the Prophet (sa) inquired why he had chosen a mature lady rather than a girl of similar age. Jabir told the Prophet (sa) that the reason for his choice was that his mother had passed away and after the martyrdom of his father at Uhud he had become responsible for his seven young sisters, so he had chosen a motherly kind of lady for a wife who would help him to care for them. The Prophet (sa) was touched by Jabir's noble decision and commended him for his choice. Medina lay but three miles away so the Prophet (sa) stopped at a place called Sirar and told Jabir of his intent to sacrifice some camels before

entering the City. During the course of their conversation, the Prophet (sa) commented to Jabir that by now his wife would have learned that he was almost home and be preparing the house for him, beating the sand from the cushions. Jabir told him that they had no cushions to which the Prophet (sa) replied. "Allah willing, you will have some soon." The morning after their return, Jabir took his camel and made it kneel outside the door of the Prophet's house. The Prophet (sa) came out to greet him and asked him to leave the camel and go to the Mosque, and offer two units of prayer, which he did. After Jabir had offered his prayer, the Prophet (sa) instructed Bilal to weigh an ounce of gold, to which the Prophet (sa) -- as was his generous custom -- added some extra. Jabir was pleased and gratefully took the gold, but as he turned to go the Prophet (sa) called him back and told him to take the camel as a gift and keep the gold as well. There are many other such accounts that relate to the Prophet's generous and caring nature. In turn, his companions tried hard to emulate his fine example and it was through such fine examples that many a heart was reached and guided.

CHAPTER 82 SALMAN OF PERSIA

Many years before the advent of Islam, Salman had been raised by his father to serve in the temples of Persia. As Salman grew he secretly started to challenge the validity of worshiping idols and started to search for the truth. There were two sects of good living people who did not worship the Persian idols that interested Salman but both claimed that they followed the teachings of Jesus, however, the doctrines were distinctively different. He listened to both sects and chose not to follow the one that preached the concept of the trinity as it occurred to him that worshiping three gods instead of One was very much akin to the pagan religions of Persia. He chose to follow the Nazarenes who taught the Creator was One and that Jesus was His prophet, not a god or His son, however, he hid his conversion from his father. Salman had many experiences in his search for the truth, and served several bishops. The first bishop was, however, corrupt who took from the poor and used the proceeds to satisfy his lusts, so he abandoned him in search of one more pious. He found a pious Nazarene bishop to teach him and served him for many years until his death. When he died Salman sought to serve another Nazarene bishop and was blessed to find one who was more knowledgeable and pious than the last.

BISHOPS OF 1400 YEARS AGO

The bishop spoke to him many times about a special prophecy of Jesus. Salman was taught that it was written in the Holy Scriptures that Prophet Jesus had foretold the coming of a new prophet who would be sent after him, and that he would appear in Arabia and went on to described the location of his appearance. As death approached the bishop, Salman asked if he knew of another bishop to guide him but the Nazarene bishop said he knew of none, however, he advised him to go in search of the city he described in Arabia.

BISHOPS OF TODAY

It seems strange that the bishops of 1400 years ago awaited the coming of Prophet Muhammad (sa). They knew his signs and even his birth-place, yet after his coming and their rejection they abandoned this prophecy so that they neither await the coming of the last Prophet of Allah (sa) nor even speak of it.

SALMAN ARRIVAL IN MEDINA

It was shortly after the death of the bishop that Salman's father learned of his son's conversion, in a burst of rage he had his son bound with rope so that he could not leave the house. Salman was a strong young man, and one day as he sat bound in his room news arrived that an Arab caravan was about to return to Arabia. It was the opportunity he had been waiting for so he summoned all his strength, broke loose from the ropes that bound him and went to them. When Salman met the leader of the caravan he offered him a herd of camels and all his wealth if he would take him with them, the deal was struck and so shortly thereafter he left with them. Just before the caravan reached Yathrib, as Medina was then called, the Arabs took not only Salman's camels and wealth but sold him into slavery to a Jew from the tribe of Krayzah. Salman was very disheartened by the turn of events until the Prophet's arrival in Medina. It was then that he was able to recognize that his circumstances had not been a misfortune, as he had previously thought, but a very great blessing of Allah to him, for he had unknowingly, and certainly not through his own planning, arrived at the place the bishop described to him and so it was that Salman converted to Islam. Salman did his best to follow the ways of Islam but it was difficult and it grieved him when he was unable to take part in the encounters of Badr and Uhud, but as he was a slave he had no choice but to remain behind. Salman seldom had a chance to meet his fellow Muslims as his owner made him work long hours in the fields and groves. He longed to be free and join his brethren and so one day he decided to go to his owner and asked how much he would need to buy himself out of his bondage. His owner demanded a very high price for his release -- no less than forty ounces of gold as well as three hundred planted date palms -- and he became very disheartened. One day, Salman was blessed to meet the Prophet (sa) and told him of his predicament. The Prophet (sa), who was deeply touched by Salman’s story, told Salman to write his owner an agreement, saying that he would pay the amount required in full. When the Prophet (sa) told his companions about Salman and asked them to donate as many date palms as they could, the companions responded generously. Some gave as many as thirty young palm tress, others twenty and so on until the required number was satisfied.

THE HUMILITY OF THE PROPHET (sa) WHO LABORED TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF HIS FOLLOWER

Now that the palms had been gathered, the Prophet (sa) told Salman to go and prepare the land in readiness to plant the young trees and that once he had finished he would plant the trees himself. The companions joined Salman in the preparation of the ground and together they dug the holes. When all was finished they told the Prophet (sa) so he returned with them

to the grove and planted all but one of the trees. All the saplings flourished except for the one that had not been planted by him whereupon another sapling was planted. Prophet Muhammad (sa) had been given a nugget of gold -- about the size of a hen's egg -- and without a second thought gave it to Salman telling him to buy his freedom with it. Salman was concerned that the weight of the nugget would be insufficient and asked how much more gold would be necessary to complete the agreement. The Prophet (sa) supplicated to Allah, then took the nugget, put it in his mouth, rolled his tongue around it, then gave it back to Salman saying: "Take it, and pay the full price with it." When the nugget was weighed, it weighed exactly forty ounces and Salman was released from captivity.

CHAPTER 83 THE MARAUDERS OF DUMAT AL JANDAL

For sometime, caravans destined for Medina carrying merchandize and provisions for the Muslims from Syria had been attacked and plundered. The perpetrators were, for the most part, marauders from the tribe of Kalb, and the attacks were usually carried out in a place called Dumat al Jandal, an oasis that lay on the border of Syria. Another caravan destined for Medina had been robbed and it was clear that the marauders had no intention of ceasing their activities. It was time to take affirmative action and so with the intent of scattering the marauders and regaining their property, the Prophet (sa) together with a thousand Muslims sped in haste across the desert to Dumat al Jandal. The Prophet (sa) and his followers were well aware that news of their determination would spread swiftly throughout Arabia and that the desired message would reach its intended destinations.

CHAPTER 84 A PATTERN OF LIFE EMERGES

Only a few years prior to Islam, each tribe had governed itself. There had been little or no unity among the many tribes except for the occasional alliance that lay dormant until a situation arose. Now, Arabs from every quarter of Arabia began to flock to Medina bringing with them diversified approaches. To an unbeliever, the situation might well have spelled internal disaster, however, Allah, in His Mercy united them all with one heart and sent down the verses:

" ... It is He who supported you with His victory and with believers, and brought their hearts together. If you had given away all the riches of the earth, you could not have so united them, but Allah has united them. He is Almighty, Wise." Koran 8:62-63

And so it was that Muslims from a multitude of different backgrounds now settled in Medina and put aside their differences. They were united as one under Allah and His Prophet (sa), for obedience to the Prophet (sa) is the same as being obedient to Allah. Each of the five obligatory daily prayers were offered in the Mosque and when Bilal called them to prayers, those able to attend made their way to join their brothers and sisters in the congregation. During the interval between the obligatory evening and night prayer the Prophet (sa) would

encourage his companions to offer voluntary prayers informing them that, if Allah willed, it would increase their rank in Paradise. He would also expound the meaning of the verses of the Holy Koran and speak of the many rewards of Paradise as well as the punishment of Hell. He never spoke upon religious matters without either receiving instructions from Allah via the Angel Gabriel or having been shown them in a vision. The sincere yearning of the companions to come closer to their Lord was evident as they spent many hours during the night worshiping Allah. Allah makes mention of these companions in the Koran saying:

" ... whose sides forsake their couches as they supplicate to their Lord in fear and hope; who give in charity of that which We have given them. No soul knows what pleases the eye is in store for them as a recompense for what they used to do." Koran 32:16-7

THE VALUE OF THE REMEMBRANCE (ZIKR) OF ALLAH AND HIS PROPHET (sa)

Allah said:

"So remember Me. I will remember you. Give thanks to Me And do not be ungrateful towards Me." Koran 2:152

He also said:

"Allah and His angels praise and venerate the Prophet. Believers, praise and venerate him And pronounce peace upon him in abundance." Koran 33:56

One day the Prophet (sa) asked his companions, "Is there anyone of you who has enough strength to do a thousand goods in a day?" The companions asked how this was possible, to which our beloved Prophet (sa) replied, 'If you exalt Allah a hundred times, you will be recompensed with a thousand good deeds, or a thousand of your sins will be wiped away." He also told them if they said, 'Exalted is Allah, and to Him belongs all praise' a date palm would be planted for the suppliant in Paradise. The companions were so grateful and delighted with the news that they would often exceed the number, hoping for even greater rewards and forgiveness. The Prophet (sa) taught his companions that the example of one who remembers his Lord and the one who does not is like the difference between the living and the dead. The companions were overjoyed when he (sa) told them that Allah said, 'I am to My worshipper as he imagines Me to be. I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his mind, I remember him in Mine, and if he remembers Me in company, I remember him in better company.' There were many poor people among the companions who grieved at not being able to be charitable like their richer brethren. One day the Prophet (sa) told his companions, "Shall I tell you what your best and purest deed is with your King that will raise your rank to the highest. One which is better for you than spending gold and silver, and is even better for you than if you should be engaged with the enemy and cut off their necks, and they cut off yours?" The companions anxiously replied, "Indeed, please tell us!" He replied, "It

is the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted."

THE PRAYER ON THE PROPHET (sa)

Such was the great love for the Prophet (sa) that his companions were even more elated when he told them that every time they supplicated to Allah for praise and venerations upon him, (and even after Allah had taken him to Himself) an angel would come to him (in his resting place, rawdah) and inform him of the supplication and that Allah, in His Mercy, increased the supplication tenfold. It is no wonder that no matter whether the companions were engaged in their work, daily chores or family life that one would see and hear them continuously supplicating for blessings upon our beloved Prophet (sa) and exalting Allah by remembering Him in His Precious Names.

SALMAN AND ABU DARDA

There were, however, some companions that had become over zealous in their devotions and when it was brought to the attention of the Prophet (sa) he advocated moderation, for his manners were those established in the Holy Koran and he did not desire hardship for his followers. He recommended that the twenty-four hours of the day and night be ideally divided into three sections, a third for worship, a third for work and a third for the family. One day, Salman decided to visit his friend Abu Darda. When Abu Darda's wife opened the door, he could not help but notice that her appearance was somewhat unkempt, so he inquired what the matter was, whereupon she told him that her husband had no desire for her. Abu Darda heard the voice of his friend and came to greet him then prepared some food for Salman but told him to eat alone as he was offering voluntary fast. Salman refused to eat and told him that he would not eat unless he ate with him. So, Abu Darda broke his voluntary fast and they ate together, after which he invited Salman to spend the night with him. During the middle of the night Abu Darda arose to offer some voluntary prayers but Salman told him to go back to sleep, so he went back to bed. Later, Abu Darda arose again and Salman told him yet again to go back to bed. Towards the latter part of the night, Salman awoke him and together they offered their voluntary prayers. After the conclusion of their prayers Salman reminded his friend that it is indeed true that one owes one's duty to his Lord, but, at the same time, the body has rights as well as his wife, and as such he must fulfill those duties accordingly. The next morning the two friends went to the Prophet (sa) to relate the matter whereupon the Prophet (sa) confirmed that Salman's moderate approach was the better.

THE FAST OF AMR

Abdullah, Amr's son told a friend of his intention to fast every day and spend the night offering voluntary prayers reciting the Koran in its entirety each night. When news of Abdullah's intent reached the Prophet (sa) he sent for him and asked if the report he had heard was correct whereupon Abdullah confirmed it to be so. The Prophet (sa) was concerned for Abdullah and

told him that his intention would prove too difficult, and advised that he offer the voluntary fast just three days a month as the value of a good deed is tenfold, and by fasting just three days a month his fast would be equal to the fast of a lifetime.

THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROPHET (SA) TO RECITE THE KORAN ONCE A MONTH AND TO FAST THREE DAYS A MONTH

Abdullah, who was a strong young man, told the Prophet (sa) that he was capable of better than that, so the Prophet (sa) suggested that he fast every third day instead. When Abdullah persisted with his intention, the Prophet (sa) advised him to fast alternate days. He told him that this way of fasting was the same way in which Prophet David, peace be upon him, had fasted and that his fast was the most fair, and there was no fast better than that. The compassionate wisdom of Prophet Muhammad (sa) could not dissuade Abdullah, and so he fasted every day, prayed and recited the Koran during the night. When old age overtook Abdullah, he told his family and companions that he wished he had taken the advice of the Prophet (sa) to fast three days during the month and complete the recitation of the Koran once during month. However, not wishing to abandon the word he had given to the Prophet (sa), he continued to fast until death overtook him, but would offer his complete recitation of the Koran over the course of the day and night.

THE VALUE OF THE CHAPTER "AL IKLAS - THE ONENESS"

When the Prophet (sa) wished to tell his companions about a certain subject, he would not force them to listen, rather, in humility he would ask if they would like to know something. On one such occasion he asked his companions, "Would any among you find it burdensome to recite one third of the Koran during the night? By He in whose Hands is my life, the recitation of the chapter "Al Ikhlas - the Oneness" is equal to one third of the Koran." This short chapter is the essence of the Islamic belief and the simple unchanged and unchangeable message the Prophet (sa) brought:

"Say: 'He is Allah, the One, the called upon. Who has not given birth, and has not been born, and there is none equal to Him." Koran Chapter 112 Al Ikhlas - The Oneness

Such was the degree of the companions sincerity not only in belief, actions and deeds that the Prophet (sa) described them as being like the stars shinning brightly in the dark night sky. Whenever he ordered them to stop doing something, they had no hesitation in abandoning it completely. He would often tell them of a voluntary deed which, by its doing, would benefit them in the Hereafter, of these deeds he recommended that they were done as often as his companions were able, for he disliked imposing hardship upon his followers.

THE DAILY LIFE OF THE PROPHET (sa)

The Prophet (sa) would neither turn away nor look down upon anyone, no matter whether they happened to be a believer or an unbeliever, rich or poor. His patience and genuine care were unparalleled, and no one, except the most hard-hearted, ever left his company except with a gladdened heart.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SA) PRACTICED WHAT HE PREACHED

Prophet Muhammad (sa) led an exemplary life. He practiced what he preached, and Allah honors him and bears witness in the Holy Koran saying:

"Surely, you (Prophet Muhammad) are of a great morality." 68:4

He taught his followers to care for one another and not to ignore a fellow Muslim when they greeted with peace, but to respond with a greeting like it or one better. Under his guidance, the elderly were now respected and looked after with kindness. He encouraged the visitation of the sick, and protecting one's neighbors no matter whether they were believers or not. He encouraged truthfulness, forbearance, and suppression of anger saying that anger was from the heat of Hell, and promoted tolerance and forgiveness. Amongst the many other noble qualities was that when a fellow Muslim passed away one should walk in the funeral procession and pray for the deceased. He warned his followers not to pass slanderous remarks, to lie, to be greed, miserly, rude, arrogant and conceited. He warned of obscene language, envy, injustice and amongst other harmful, destructive characteristics, oppression. One day Saad, Hisham's son asked Lady Ayesha about the Prophet's character. She asked Saad if he recited the Koran, whereupon he replied that he did. Then she told him, "The moral nature of the Messenger of Allah (sa) was that of the Koran." Amongst his practice and characteristics mentioned in the Koran are:

"Allah orders justice, and good deeds, and giving to one's kindred. He forbids indecency, dishonor and insolence. He admonishes you in order that you take heed." 16:90

"Surely, he who bears patiently and forgives, indeed that is true constancy." 42:43

"... Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not yearn that Allah forgives you?" 24:22

"Repel with that which is most just, and see, the one whom there is enmity between you will be as if he were a loyal guide." 41:34

"who spend in prosperity and in adversity, for those who curb their anger and those who forgive people. And Allah loves the charitable." 3:134

"Believers, abstain from most suspicion, some suspicion is a sin. Neither spy nor backbite one another." 49:12

JUSTICE PREVAILS

Whenever disputes arose between Muslims and other citizens of Medina, he would arbitrate fairly between the parties and as one might expect, justice always prevailed regardless of belief. In his personal life he treated his wives with equal fairness. He had no room of his own and devised a rota whereby he would stay one day with one wife, the next with another and so on. Even though he was the greatest prophet (sa), he did not consider it beneath himself to help with the daily household chores and would often be found modestly helping around the house and when the need arose mending his clothes.

THE PROPHET'S LOVE OF LITTLE CHILDREN

He loved being in the company of little children and always had time to spare for them. He would listen to them and talk gently to them, and there was nothing the little ones loved more than when he kissed them or they held his hand as they walked with him. O mummy dear, O mummy dear, why do trees bow in the wind? My darling child, my darling child, they bow in obedience to Him. O mummy dear, O mummy dear, how many leaves grow upon trees? My darling child, my darling child, Allah alone knows the number of these. O mummy dear, O mummy dear, who should I love best? My darling child, my darling child, It's Allah and His Prophet, the kind, the blessed!

AL HASAN AND AL HUSSAIN

It was always a great delight when Lady Fatima brought her two very young sons, Hasan and Hussain, to visit -- they were very dear to him and he would play with them and refer to them as "his sons". Little Hasan and Hussain loved to accompany their beloved grandfather to the Mosque and would pray as best they could alongside him. However, one day as the Prophet (sa) prostrated in his prayer, one of his young grandsons climbed upon his back and sat there for quite a while. The Prophet (sa) showed no sign of irritation and waited patiently for his grandson to climb down and then continued with his prayer. The companions who were praying behind the Prophet (sa) were also prostrate and did not know the cause of its prolongation and wondered whether perhaps a new command had been sent down to extend it. After the conclusion of the prayer they inquired about the length of the prostration whereupon the Prophet (sa) smiled and told them what had happened. Through the blessing of Allah, and the example of His last Prophet (sa), there was harmony among the believers and no human being became dearer to them than their beloved Prophet (sa). In the years that followed, the Prophet (sa) told his companions that when they were asked to lead the congregational prayer on Friday, they should make the sermon brief out of consideration for the young and those in the congregation who were sick.

PROMOTION OF PERSONAL HYGIENE

He also spoke to his companions on matters of personal hygiene and advised them to brush their teeth with the splayed end of a twig called a "Mishwak", and informed them that their stomach should be filled with a third of food, another third with liquid and the remaining third with air.

ANXIOUSNESS FOR HIS COMPANY

Many were the occasions that Prophet Muhammad (sa) invited his companions to share a meal with him. However, in their anxiousness for his company and to learn more from him, some had taken to arriving before the meal and then lingering after they had eaten, which was an intrusion on the Prophet's time. Then Allah sent down the verse:

"Believers, do not enter the houses of the Prophet for a meal without waiting for the proper time, unless you are given permission. But if you are invited, enter, and when you have eaten, disperse, not desiring conversation, for that is hurtful to the Prophet and he would be shy before you; but of the truth Allah is not shy." Koran 33:53

On other occasions, rather than disturbing the Prophet (sa), some of his companions had taken to asking his wives to relay their matters to him, this they did from behind a curtain as Allah had sent down the instruction:

" ... And when you ask his wives for any thing, speak to them from behind a curtain, this is cleaner for your hearts and theirs." Koran 33:53

Allah also informed the companions that they were not permitted to marry his wives after the death of the Prophet (sa) saying:

" ... nor shall you ever wed his wives after him, surely, this would be a monstrous thing with Allah." Koran 33:53

THE BEDOUIN AND THE MIMOSA TREE

It is unclear on which journey this story occurred, but one day when the Prophet (sa) and some of his companions were traveling they reached a wadi where they met another Bedouin. The Prophet (sa) asked where he was going and the Bedouin replied that he was returning to his family. Then the Prophet (sa) asked, "Would you like something which is good?" "What is it?" inquired the Bedouin. "It is that you bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His worshiper and Messenger." The Bedouin asked, "Who will bear witness to what you say?" Whereupon the Prophet (sa) said: "That mimosa tree." Without hesitation the tree uprooted itself and came walking to the Prophet (sa). The Prophet (sa) asked the tree to bear witness to the truth whereupon it confirm the truthfulness of the matter three times

then returned to its place.

THE SON OF ABU TALHA

Abu Talha's young son had been taken very ill and the family became very concerned about his condition. Much as he would have liked, Abu Talha was unable to stay by his son's side all the time and had left the house to attend to a certain matter, and it was during that time the angels took away the little one's soul. There was great sadness in the house and his mother, Umm Sulaim, asked the rest of her household not to speak of the matter to Abu Talha until she had done so. That evening when Abu Talha returned he asked his wife about his son whereupon she replied, "He is more settled than he was," and gave him his evening meal. After he had eaten they slept together then she broke the news to him gently saying, "Abu Talha, tell me, if someone lends something to another and afterwards asks for it back, would the borrower be right to withhold what was borrowed?" Abu Talha answered, "No," whereupon she softly said, "Then hope for your reward from Allah for that which has overtaken your son." Abu Talha became upset and exclaimed, "You kept me in ignorance about my son's condition until after we had been together!" The following morning Abu Talha went to the Messenger of Allah (sa) and told him what had happened, whereupon the Prophet (sa) asked, "Were you and your wife together last night?" and Abu Talha replied that they had been. The Prophet (sa) raised his hands in supplication saying, "O Allah, bless them both." Umm Sulaim had become pregnant on the night she lost her son and nine months later, as they were returning with the Prophet (sa) from a journey Umm Sulaim's contractions started. She knew it would not be long before her baby arrived so Abu Talha stayed with her whilst the Prophet (sa) continued on to Medina, which was but a few halts away. Abu Talha had always been anxious to accompany the Prophet (sa) no matter where he went so he supplicated to Allah saying, "O Lord, you know I am eager to go with the Prophet (sa) wherever he goes, and to be with him upon his return, now I am detained as You see. No sooner had he supplicated than Umm Sulaim said, "Abu Talha, I no longer feel the pain, let us continued." So they continued and when they reached Medina she gave birth to a baby boy. Abu Talha took his infant son to the Prophet (sa) who named him Abdullah, then, he chewed upon a date and placed some in the baby's mouth and supplicated for blessings upon the baby. Abdullah was indeed a very blessed child, when he grew up he had nine sons and each one was able to recite the Koran by heart.

THE DAUGHTER WHO WAS BURIED ALIVE

One day a Bedouin who had just embraced Islam went to the Prophet (sa) and with great shame told him that before he embraced Islam he had buried his five-year old daughter alive in a certain valley then taken her gold and silver. The Prophet (sa) asked the Bedouin to take him to the valley and so he took him there. Upon reaching the place where the little girl lay buried, the Prophet (sa) called her saying, "By the permission of Allah, live," whereupon she was restored to life and her head appeared above the ground. The Prophet (sa) told her that her parents had embraced Islam and if she wished she could be with them, but the little girl

declined saying, "I have no need, Allah is kinder and more merciful than they."

THE BEDOUIN AND THE GAZELLE

Lady Umm Salamah related that one day when the Prophet (sa) was in the desert, and came across gazelle that had been caught by a Bedouin. When the gazelle saw the Prophet (sa) it cried out in human speech, "O Prophet of Allah (sa), a Bedouin has caught me and wants to kill me. I have young; please ask him to release me so that I may go and suckle them, and then return." The Prophet (sa) asked, "Will you return or not?" "Yes," replied the gazelle, "I will." So he released her and went to suckle her young, then, as promised, returned. The Bedouin asked what the Prophet (sa) wished him to do with her so he told him he would like him to release her, whereupon the gazelle was set free and as she ran off to her young she raised her voice and said, "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and you are His Prophet."

CHAPTER 85

LADY ZAYNAB, DAUGHTER OF JAHSH

Many years before, when Zayd and his mother from the Syrian tribe of Kalb were visiting his maternal grandparents from the tribe of Tayy, the village had been attacked by marauders from the tribe Kayn and Zayd, who was young, had been seized and taken to Mecca to be sold. Upon the arrival of the tribesmen in Mecca they proceeded to auction the boy off to the highest bidder. When Lady Khadijah saw him she took pity on him and paid the price. Upon her wedding day she gave Zayd to the Prophet (sa) as part of her wedding gift to him. Zayd, like other members of the household, was never treated as or thought of being a slave as he would have been in other households. He grew to love his new family dearly and had chosen to remain with the Prophet (sa) in preference to returning with his father who, when he learned of his son's whereabouts, traveled to Medina to buy him back. But money wasn't the issue, the Prophet (sa) told Zayd's father that if Zayd desired he was free to return with him as he did not want any compensation. However, to the astonishment of Zayd's father he told him he was very happy and did not wish to return. The Prophet (sa) was greatly touched by Zayd's reaction and took him to the Ka'ba where he not only announced that from that moment onward was he free, but that he had taken him to be his son. When Zayd's father realized just how happy his son was he accepted the matter and returned home happy in the knowledge that his son was not only free but loved and well cared for. Zayd had been amongst those who had converted to Islam in its very early days and now that he had come of age the Prophet (sa) suggested that he might like to marry Zaynab, a relative of the Prophet (sa). Zayd was agreeable, however, Zaynab was not sure if she wanted to marry him so the Prophet (sa) did not press the matter any further. After some time, Zaynab decided that she would accept Zayd's proposal and so the young couple were married. Not long after their marriage, problems arose between them. For a year or so they tried to resolve these

differences but they remained unresolved and their lives were not in harmony with one another. One day Zayd became very upset and went to the Prophet (sa) to tell him of their problems and asked his permission to divorce his wife, but the Prophet (sa) advised him not to do so and to fear Allah. However, their circumstances did not improve and he went to the Prophet (sa) on several other occasions, but each time the Prophet (sa) gave him the same advice. Matters deteriorated further between them to the extent that Zayd went yet again to the Prophet (sa) but this time he entreated him to let him divorce her, whereupon the Prophet (sa) finally gave Zayd his permission. The waiting period of four months had elapsed and the Prophet (sa) contemplated upon marrying Zaynab. However, at that time in Arabia, when someone proclaimed that they had taken a non-blood outsider to be their son, it was considered that the outsider was now as closely related as their own flesh and blood, and as it was forbidden to marry the wife of your son, he kept his thoughts to himself fearing the talk of people until Allah clarified the situation. Then Allah send down the following verse:

"And when you said to he (Zayd) whom Allah had favored and yourself have favored: 'Keep your wife and fear Allah,' and you sought to hide in yourself what Allah was to reveal, fearing people: although Allah has a better right for you to fear Him. And when Zayd had accomplished what he would of her (divorce), We gave her to you (Prophet Muhammad) in marriage, so that there is no fault in believers concerning (marriage to) the former spouse of their foster children if they divorced them. The decree of Allah must be done." Koran, 33:37

Then, referring to the relationship between the Prophet (sa) and Zayd, Allah tells us:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men. He is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets. Allah has knowledge of all things." Koran, 33:40

And so, the Prophet (sa) took Lady Zaynab to be his wife. To celebrate the Prophet’s marriage, Anas’ mother, Umm Sulaim prepared some cakes made with dates and flour and put them in an earthenware container then asked her son to take it with her greetings to the Prophet (sa). The Prophet (sa) and Lady Zaynab were touched by the kind gesture and the Prophet (sa) asked Anas to go out and invite everyone he met to come and partake of the food. Later, when Anas was asked how many guests there were he replied that there had been about three hundred people, and all miraculously ate their fill of cake, yet after they had departed the earthenware container remained full. Lady Zaynab had many fine qualities, she was known for her piety and fasting. She was also affectionately referred to as "The Mother of the Poor" as more often than not she would give away her earnings as a skilled leather worker to those in need. The love the Prophet (sa) held for his foster son continued to flourish but Zayd reverted to his original name, Zayd, the son of Haritha, as Allah had made it very clear that adoption is forbidden in Islam, however fostering is highly recommended but the child must retain its biological father’s name.

CHAPTER 86 THE REVENGE OF THE TRIBE OF NADIR

As the fifth year drew to a close, the expelled Jews from the tribe of Nadir that had relocated to Khybar a little over two years before became more restless than ever. There had been talk for a long time that the Koraysh were bent on revenge and planned to rid themselves of Prophet Muhammad (sa) and his followers. With this in mind, Huyay -- who had been the chief conspirator in the failed attempt to kill the Prophet (sa) -- together with the chieftains of Khybar journeyed across the hot desert sands to Mecca to progress the matter. They were taken to Abu Sufyan upon their arrival who welcomed them as they ingratiated themselves telling him that the Koraysh were dearer to them than anyone else on account of their intent to rid themselves of the Prophet (sa). Abu Sufyan was heartened by these words and together with Safwan, and the other Koraysh chieftains they made their way to the Ka'ba, entered it, and took a solemn oath that they would not fail one another in the achievement of their mutual goal. During this congenial occasion Abu Sufyan inquired of his new allies, "You are knowledgeable of the first scripture, therefore, give us your opinion. Is our religion better than that of Muhammad?" Without hesitation, and despite the undeniable fact that both Judaism and Islam preached the same message, the Oneness of the Creator and the abomination of idols, the Jews replied, "Your religion is better than his -- you are nearer to the truth!" In an effort to enlist the hostile or indifferent nomadic tribes of the Najd, it was agreed that the Jews should visit with their chieftains and if revenge was insufficient enough reason to win their support then they would offer handsome bribes. There was no need to offer a bribe to the tribe of Asad; they readily lent their support. However, the tribe of Ghatafan with its branches declared their need to be recompensed. Eventually a deal was struck with the Ghatafan being promised half the date harvest of Khybar. As for the tribe of Sulaym, there were among them those who inclined to Islam and so the leaders of the Nadir were unable to secure their full support. When the tribe of Amir was approached they declined, remaining loyal to the alliance contracted earlier with the Prophet (sa). The current strength of the Koraysh army and its previous allies was four thousand strong, however, through the effort of Huyay and his fellow chieftains, their ranks were now swelled by an additional two thousand, seven hundred men -- more than double their number at Uhud and so the preparations for further hostilities were once again set in motion.

CHAPTER 87 THE KORAYSH PREPARE FOR THE ATTACK

The enemies of the Prophet (sa) were divided into two divisions, the Koraysh, together with its proven allies from the south were to set out upon their march to Medina via the coastal route which was also the same route they had taken to Uhud. As for the second division, it was agreed that they would approach Medina from their homelands of the Najd. There was much prestige to be gained in the forthcoming encounter so, although Abu Sufyan was the commander of the Koraysh army, it was agreed among the Koraysh chieftains that they would take it in turns to lead the army so that the honor would be evenly divided.

THE WARNING

Not everyone in Mecca supported Abu Sufyan. There were a few, including Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet (sa), who once again feared for his nephew's safety, so under the cloak of secrecy he dispatched several horsemen to Medina with the news. The urgent state of affairs compelled them to ride with such haste that they reached Medina in just four days. Upon reaching Medina, the horsemen wasted no time and went directly to the Prophet (sa) to inform him of the two armies advancing on Medina on either side giving details of their numbers and weaponry. Once again, the Muslims had a week in which to prepare for the hostilities. Immediately, the Prophet (sa) shrewdly sent word to his followers in the outlying areas of Medina to return to the City, and called for a meeting to discuss the strategy that would best serve them. Once more he reminded the companions that if they obeyed Allah and were patient, victory would be theirs. His words made an indelible impression upon his companions as they remembered the disobedience of some among them with its consequences at Uhud. Ideas abounded from every quarter, however, Salman proposed a plan that had been both used and proven in Persia. Salman advised the Prophet (sa) that when the Persians feared a cavalry attack, they would dig a large, circular trench around them as it was extremely difficult for the horses of the enemy to cross the wide divide and consequently they were better able to defend themselves. Salman's proposal met with great enthusiasm and so it was agreed that this would be the best course to adopt.

THE DIGGING OF THE TRENCH

It was unnecessary to dig a complete trench around the entire City as there was an unbroken line of fortified houses, strong enough to resist the advance of the enemy in one part. Then again, outside the City lay the fortresses of their allies from the Jewish tribe of Krayzah that also afforded them additional protection. There was yet another blessing, outside the City towards the north-west lay impenetrable hillocks of rock. One of these hillocks was called the hill of Sal, and it was there that they decided to make their camp after connecting the existing fortifications together by the trench. The site had other advantages; the ground on the near side of Sal's slope was considerably higher than in other places, not only did it afford additional protection but from it they would be able to monitor the movements of the unbelievers. There was no time to waste, so Salman instructed the companions on the depth and width of the trench, and the digging began. Salman, had until recently been the slave of the tribe of Krayzah and knew that his former masters owned many tools, so it was agreed that they should be asked to loan them in accordance with the pact they had signed with the Prophet (sa) a few years ago that also stated they would not ally themselves with the enemy of the Prophet (sa). The Krayzah were quick to realize that they stood to loose their possessions and date groves if they did not help defend Medina and so every tool they possessed was made available and work began. Each section of the Muslim community was assigned a specific area to excavate and soon the continuous sound of axes hacking away at the ground and shovels removing the loosened ground filled the air, coming only to a halt at the time of prayer and when sleep finally overtook them. Prophet Muhammad (sa) worked tirelessly alongside his companions who encouraged one another to work harder. As for Salman, he was an extremely strong, fit person. During his years of slavery he had labored

tirelessly in the fields digging and carrying, and his companions were amazed to see just how strong he actually was; all were of the opinion that he was worth ten of them put together. As the digging progressed, rocks were excavated and put to one side for use during the anticipated encounter. There were not enough baskets to go around to transport the earth so the companions took to using their upper garments as bags. Young lads came out to lend a hand, but the work was much too arduous so much to their sorrow, they were thanked but told to return home.

THE MIRACLE OF THE BOULDER

Jabir and his companions were working hard on their section when they struck a huge boulder. Try as best they might, no one, not even the strongest among them could shatter it let alone move it. When the news of the boulder reached the Prophet (sa) he left his section of digging and made his way to it, then, taking hold of a ax he struck the boulder three times whereupon it disintegrated into a piles of sand. When the Prophet (sa) struck the boulder the first time, a light shone so brilliantly from it that it reached the ramparts of the castles in distant Yemen; which was then under the rule of Abyssinia. Upon his second strike, the light stretched as far away as the fortresses of Syria and upon the third, it reached and lit up the white palace of Chosroes in Madian. The Prophet (sa) later explained that the miraculous light was a sign that one day Islam would spread to these distant lands.

THE MIRACULOUS MEAL

Before the Prophet (sa) returned to his digging, Jabir asked permission to return home to his wife, the Prophet (sa) agreed and Jabir went home. Jabir had noticed that the Prophet (sa) had strapped a stone to his stomach to ease the pains of hunger and had been told that he had not eaten for three days. It distressed him greatly to see him in such a condition and so upon reaching his home he asked his wife if she had any food in the house. Jabir's wife told him that the only food they had was some barley and their nanny goat. Immediately, Jabir went out, slaughtered the goat and ground the barley. A fire was kindled and a large cooking pot filled with water placed on it to which the goat meat was added, and then the oven was made ready to bake the bread. When the food was almost ready and the barley flour kneaded, Jabir returned to the Prophet (sa) and told him that he had prepared some food at home and asked if he and some others would care to join him in a meal. The Prophet (sa) was grateful and asked what he had prepared whereupon Jabir told him and he remarked, "That is indeed a lot of food." The Prophet (sa) told Jabir to return to his wife and tell her not to remove the pot from the fire, nor yet the bread from the oven until he arrived. Then, the Prophet (sa) turned to all his companions and said, "Let us go," and so they all laid down their tools and made their way to Jabir's house. Jabir reached his home shortly before the Prophet (sa) and his companions arrived and told his wife, "The blessing of Allah be upon you, the Prophet (sa) together with all the Muhajir, Ansar and others are coming!" Shortly afterwards, the Prophet (sa) entered and told his companions to take their place a few at a time and not to over crowd the room. Then, he broke the bread into pieces and put some of it on top of the meat,

following this, he took some more bread from the oven and asked his companions to pass the food around. As soon as the first group had taken their fill, the next group entered and the Prophet (sa) humbly served his companions until all were replete. Even after everyone had eaten, then same quantity of bread and meat remained as it was before they had all eaten. Then the Prophet (sa) spoke to Jabir's wife saying, "Eat some and send some as a gift to the hungry."

CHAPTER 88 THE ENCOUNTER AT THE TRENCH

Six days had now passed since word reached the Prophet (sa) of the Koraysh and their allies march. By now, the Muslims whose home lay on the outskirts of Medina had left seeking the safety of City. The Prophet (sa) and his companions, who numbered three thousand, had just finished digging the trench when news arrived that the Koraysh army had been seen marching along the valley of Akik, which lies to the south-west of Medina, and that the Ghatafan and Najd tribes were but a short distance from the mountain of Uhud. Time was short, so the Prophet (sa) sent word that the women and children should confine themselves to the upper rooms of the fortified houses, however Ladies Ayesha, Umm Salamah and Zaynab took it in turns to go the Prophet's tent at the foot of Sal to tend to his needs. The Koraysh had relied heavily upon being able to pillage the crops of the Muslims to provide fodder for their horses, however, much to their dismay, when they reached the oasis they found the fields had already been harvested. There was nothing to feed their hungry horses and the supplies they brought with them were limited. However, the camels of the tribes of Ghatafan and the Najd were more fortunate as they were able to graze upon the herbage and bushes that grew near Uhud. Due to the unexpected circumstances, the Koraysh knew that they must strike quickly, otherwise their cavalry would be too weak to make an effective strike, and so word was sent to their allies to join them immediately outside Medina.

PRELUDE TO THE ATTACK

The Koraysh had expected the believers to defend themselves from the fortified buildings and fortresses of Medina. When they saw that the Prophet (sa) had made his camp outside the City their spirits rode high as they thought the battle would be over quickly and victory would soon be theirs. However, as Abu Sufyan and his men drew closer to the Prophet's camp their spirits were soon deflated. They thought that they would be able to overcome the Prophet's army by the sheer force of their numbers, but now, their eyes fell upon the deep, wide trench with archers poised ready to fire. The Koraysh advanced and as soon as they came within range, a warning volley of arrows hurtled through the air and fell but a short distance in front of them. The Koraysh realized it was going to be difficult for them to even get as far as the trench and that their prospect of breaching it was considerably more difficult, so they retreated to assess the situation. The chieftains were in agreement that the best approach would be to apply tactics that would weaken a section in the line of defense, then, cross the trench and attack from within. With this intent, Khalid and Ikrima, two of the Koraysh

commanders, examined the trench from a safe distance to determine its weakest part. During their surveillance they noticed that a section of the trench was not as wide or as deep as the rest, however, it was heavily guarded and the guards needed to be eliminated if they were to penetrate the trench at that point.

HUYAY AND THE TRIBESMEN OF KRAYZAH

Huyay, from the expelled tribe of Nadir, knew that one of the fortresses blocking the approach to Medina belonged to a fellow Jew from the tribe of Krayzah by the name of Ka'b, Asad's son. Huyay hoped that he might prevail upon him to break the pact he had made with the Prophet (sa) so that the Koraysh would be able to attack the City from two directions at the same time. If he succeeded, it would mean that their pact ceased to exist and that their numbers would swell by a further seven hundred. With this in mind he went to Abu Sufyan to propose his plan. Abu Sufyan thought the idea was sound, and so Huyay made haste to the fortress. Upon reaching the fortress Huyay announced himself as he knocked at its door, but Ka'b would not open it as he suspected the reason for his visit. He, like many others of his tribe considered that it was on account of Huyay's pride and poor judgment that had led to the expulsion of the tribe of Nadir, and that his domineering personality was something they could do without. Huyay knocked several times but Ka'b still refused to let him in and reminded him that he had a pact with the Prophet (sa) and told him he was not prepared to break it. When Huyay realized he was getting nowhere, he changed his tactics and resorted to shaming Ka'b for not affording him the customary hospitality. He told him that in his eyes he was too mean to even share his food with him! Huyay's ploy worked, and reluctantly Ka'b opened the door. Huyay told Ka'b that he had brought the chieftains and armies of the Koraysh, Ghatafan, Najd and Kinanah to Medina and that their force was now ten thousand strong. He told Ka'b that they had all sworn allegiance to one another to rid themselves of Prophet Muhammad (sa) and his followers, and that this time he was sure that he would not escape.

THE WAVERING HEART

Ka'b was still reluctant to break his promise. However, the overwhelming number of the Koraysh army was something he had not reckoned upon and his heart started to waver as Huyay's persuasive tongued worked upon him. But Ka'b continued to resist and told him that if he broke the pact it would bring shame upon him. Huyay was quick to realize that Ka'b was weakening and continued to elaborate on what he deemed to be multiple advantages for them if they were rid of the Prophet (sa) and stop his preaching. Huyay was so convinced that this would be the last of the Prophet (sa) that he swore by Allah, that if the Koraysh and their allies returned to their homes and had not rid themselves of the Prophet (sa) this time, then he would stay in Ka'bs fortress with him and take the consequences. The oath Huyay had just taken was sufficient to convince Ka'b that the Prophet (sa) and his companions would not withstand the onslaught of the Koraysh army. When Huyay asked to see the pact the Prophet (sa) and Ka'b had agreed upon, Ka'b fetched it, showed it to him and Huyay tore it in half. Ka'b went to his people to relate the conversation he and Huyay had just exchanged. Despite

the convincing arguments, there was an element among them who were not convinced and refused to break their word, amongst them was Amr, Suda's son. In the Jewish community there was an elderly man by the name of ibn Al Hayyaban. He had left Syrian many years before to await the coming of the last Prophet (sa), for he was knowledgeable of the scriptures and expected his prophesied arrived in that region and taught its signs to all who would listen. Like him, many of his followers believed that the time had arrived and recognized the fact that Prophet Muhammad (sa) had the qualities mentioned in the scripture. However, the fact remained he was not a Jew, and to many this was a great obstacle as their racial pride was at stake. Like their ancestors they refused to accept the teachings of Prophet Jesus who had warned that if they did not reform themselves and follow him, the covenant would be taken away from them and given to another. Meanwhile, several of Ka'bs tribesmen decided to go out of the fortress to determine for themselves if the report Huyay had brought was true. When their eyes fell upon the formidable sight of the huge, unbelieving army, terror struck their hears, they had never seen anything like it before in their life and returned quickly to tell their tribesmen what they had seen. For the most part, the Krayzah no longer needed to be convinced and so their principals were put to one side; some even turned informant and went to the Koraysh camp to tell them of the weaker parts of the City's defense, whilst a few slipped away from the fortresses to take the news to the Prophet's camp.

THE PROPHET (sa) LEARNS OF THE BETRAYAL

Omar was the first to learn of the betrayal and went straight to tell the Prophet (sa). It was indeed an act of treachery, so the Prophet (sa) sent Zubair to determine if the report was correct. Then he sent Sa’ad from the tribe of Aws and Sa’ad from the tribe of Khazraj together with Usayd for additional confirmation, for he was never a person to act in haste nor take a decision without first having verified the matter. Zubair reached the fortress before his other companions and learned that the report was correct. When his companions arrived they pleaded with the Krayzah not to pursue their intention, but it was to no avail, they informed him that as far as they were concerned the pact no longer existed between them -- they had become enemies.

THE WEAKENED LINE OF DEFENSE

The breaking of the pact caused a weakness in the line of defense. The Jewish fortresses were no longer a protective barrier but a gate through which the enemy could advance with comparative ease, so the Prophet (sa) immediately sent a hundred men to strengthen the area. Shortly afterwards news reached the Prophet (sa) that Huyay had urged the Koraysh and their allies to send a thousand men to the fortresses and then launch an attack on the fortified buildings in which the Muslim women and children had been housed for protection. The Prophet (sa) wasted no time in sending Zayd together with three hundred men to protect them. Each night as the companions patrolled the streets they exalted Allah with such intensity that their voices rang out through the City and they appeared far greater than their number. For one reason or another, the unbelievers abandoned their intent and no harm came

to the women and children, however, the Koraysh had succeeded in weakening the Muslim army through the re-deployment of their forces. As a result the companions were forced to take longer periods patrolling the trench, and now weariness posed an additional hazard. However, spirits were lifted by the kind words and encouragement of the Prophet (sa), who reminded them that victory would be theirs if they were steadfast, and obeyed Allah and His Prophet (sa).

THE PENETRATION OF THE TRENCH

Days and nights passed and Khalid and Ikrima waited for the right opportunity to attack. However, they didn't have to wait too long as one day Ikrima noticed that the narrowest section of the trench was less well guarded than usual and so he, Khalid, Amr and two others were able to jump over it on horseback. Just as the last man cleared the trench, Ali together with some of his companions arrived to reinforce the section leaving no way for the unbelievers to retreat. Amr shouted out a challenge for someone to engage him in single combat. Without hesitation, Ali took up the challenge, but when Amr saw him he declined to fight on account of the friendship that had existed between their fathers many years before. Ali was adamant and refused to back-down, and so Amr accepted the challenge and dismounted. As they fought, clouds of dust arose in the air and the onlookers were unable to determine exactly what was going on. Then, much to their relief they heard Ali's voice exalting Allah, and his companions knew that Amr must be dead. The fight had distracted the companions attention, so one of the Koraysh seized the opportunity to try and make his escape back to the other side of the trench. Turning his horse around, he raced toward the trench only to find Nawfal from the tribe of Makhzum was unable to get out of his way quick enough and so the tribesman, with his horse, plunged headlong into the trench. When the believers saw what had happened, they made use of the stones excavated from the trench and pelted him with them. From the bottom of the trench, the unbeliever cried out saying, "Arabs, death is better than this!" whereupon they ceased their stoning and one of them climbed down into the trench and the unbeliever took his last breath. Up until now there had been considerable apprehension among the unbelieving cavalry concerning their ability to cross the trench. However, Khalid and Ikrima had demonstrated that although it was difficult it was not impossible, so several attacks were made that day and in the days that followed, but, all were of no avail. The fighting was spasmodic but none-the-less wearisome for the believers who could not afford to relax and risk being caught off guard. No fatalities were sustained on either side although Sa’ad was severely wounded when an arrow pierced an artery in his arm, however, many of the unbelievers horses were wounded.

THE MIRACULOUS SUSPENSION OF THE SETTING SUN

One day during the siege the intensity of the fighting was such that both the Zuhr and Asr prayers remained unoffered and now the daylight had started to fade which concerned the believers. The believers went to the Prophet (sa) to tell them of their concern whereupon the

Prophet (sa) supplicated to Allah and sun's descent in the heavens was suspended and remained suspended until both prayers had been offered. Immediately after the conclusion of the prayers, the sun sank and darkness fell. Now that the sun had set the unbelievers returned to their camp and so the comparative peacefulness of the evening descended. However, the believers could not afford to relax as there was always the possibility that the unbelievers might strike and take them unaware. Later that night Khalid and his cavalry returned, however Usayd and his companions spotted them and launched volleys of arrows that prevented their advance. Amongst the believing host were hypocrites and those whose faith was weak. The believers did not complain of their circumstances and their faith increased in times of hardship. However, the hypocrites and those of weak faith found it increasingly hard to endure the pangs of hunger now accentuated by the onset of cold nights and lack of sleep. Their support started to falter, soon, murmuring from these groups were heard that attempted to undermine the order of the Prophet (sa). In their opinion it was thought that the Prophet's decision should be overridden as they thought the trench afforded very little protection compared to that of the City. Their murmuring fell on the deaf ears of the strong believers and Allah sent down a verse that sustained them that reads:

"Or did you suppose that you would go to Paradise untouched by that endured by those before you! Affliction and adversity befell them; and they were shaken until the Messenger, and those who believed with him said: 'When will the victory of Allah come?' Is it not so that the victory of Allah is near." Koran 2:214

THE FAZARAH AND MURRAH, TWO TRIBES OF THE GHATAFAN

Hardship affected not only the believers, the fodder the unbelievers brought with them was virtually deplete and their horses lay wounded or weakened, however, on account of their vast numbers, tiredness was a lesser factor as they were able to take turns to rest. Out of compassion for his companions, Prophet Muhammad (sa) sent envoys by night with a message to two branch chieftains of the tribe of Ghatafan, namely the tribes of Fazarah and Murrah. The message contained an offer of one third of the highly prized date harvest of Media if they would lay down their arms and not fight against them. The dates of Medina were famous and their quality superior to those of Khybar, and so the chieftains preferred the offer of the Prophet (sa) to that of Huyay, but they were greedy, and sent word back to the Prophet (sa) that they would only settle for half the harvest. The Prophet (sa) declined and sent word that he was only prepared to let them have a third, whereupon the chieftains agreed. The Prophet (sa) asked Othman to come to his tent to draw up the peace treaty between them; then sent for the chieftains of Aws and Khazraj, the two Sa’ads, and told them of his plan. Sa’ad, who had been severely injured, asked the Prophet (sa) if his plan was something he would have them do or if Allah had commanded that it should be so, or, whether perhaps it was something he was doing out of concern for them. Sa’ad was touched by the Prophet’s concern, however he told him that not long before both he and the unbelievers worshiped false gods besides Allah, and that they had been idols worshipers, neither knowing Allah, nor yet worshiping Him. He continued to tell the Prophet (sa) that during that era the Ghatafan

had not eaten their dates unless they were given to them on account of them being their guests, or else they had bought them. He said that he felt that now that Allah had blessed them with Islam, guided and strengthened them with it and sent them His Prophet (sa), he did not see why they should be given their property. Then Sa’ad swore by Allah that the Ghatafan would be given nothing except the sword until such time that Allah decided between them. The Prophet (sa) was pleased by Sa’ads strength of belief and agreed to abandon the gesture. Othman, who had by this time, finished drawing up the peace treaty, now struck the message through and wrote, "Do your worst!"

NU'AYM FROM THE GHATAFAN TRIBE OF ASHJA

After Nu'aym's encounter with the Muslims of Medina before the second challenge of Badr, his heart inclined still further to Islam. Now that Abu Sufyan had called upon the support of the Ghatafan tribe, his branch tribe, the tribe of Ashja, had lent their support and so with reluctance he had been drawn into the conflict. It was shortly after the Prophet (sa) decided not to proceed with the treaty with the two other branches of the Ghatafan, that Nu'aym knew deep in his heart that his allegiance belonged to Allah and His Prophet (sa). When he was in Medina he had heard some of the Prophet's teachings promoting brotherly love, peace, justice and mercy. He had witnessed the unifying effect of Islam upon its very diverse congregation, now there they were, with just one third of the number of the unbelieving army, prepared to defend their religion without any thought of tribal superiority or surrender, it was indeed an act of bravery through absolute conviction and love of Allah and His Prophet (sa). It was the turning point in Nuaym's life; that night he made his way to Medina, through its City and then on towards the camp of the Prophet (sa). When he reached the camp he asked to be taken to the Prophet (sa) and upon seeing him the Prophet (sa) welcomed him and inquired as to the nature of his visit. Nu'aym told him that he had come to declare his belief and bear witness to the truth in the Oneness of the Creator that the Prophet (sa) brought, adding that he would do whatever he commanded. In passing, he mentioned that his people and the other tribes knew nothing of the teachings of Islam, so the Prophet (sa) told Nu'aym to go out and do his best to bring about discord among his people so that they would withdraw. Nu'aym thought for a minute and then asked the Prophet (sa) if deception would be permissible for he had a plan that he thought would work. The Prophet (sa) replied, "Say whatever you will to draw them away from us; war is nothing but deceit." It was time for Nu'aym to leave, and after the greetings of peace had been exchanged he made his way back though the winding streets of the City to the Krayzah fortress. For many years Nu'aym had been friendly with the Krayzah and when they saw him they welcomed him and offered him food. Nu'aym thanked them for their offer but told them that he had come to them upon a more important matter. He told them that he feared for their safety if the Koraysh and Ghatafan failed to defeat the Muslim army and returned home leaving them alone to face the Muslims. It was a matter that concerned many of the Krayzah since their chieftains had broken the pact. They remembered well how, although, Huyay and his fellow tribesmen's lives had been spared after their attempt to murder the Prophet (sa), that they had been expelled from Medina and forced to leave their homes and date groves behind -- and this was something they did not want to happen to

them. Nu'aym told them that in his opinion, if he found himself in a position such as theirs, he would not strike a blow against the Muslims unless the Koraysh and Ghatafan were prepared to hand over to them some of their leaders as a guarantee that they would not be deserted in the event that their allies were forced to retreat. Nu'aym's logic made a lot of sense, the Krayzah needed no further convincing and adopted his suggestion. Now that Nu'aym had succeeded in the first part of his plan, he made his way to Abu Sufyan's tent. He found Abu Sufyan in the company of the other Koraysh chieftains and embarked upon the second part of his plan. He told them that he had come across a very alarming piece of information which was vital to them, however, he told them that he would only divulge the matter if they swore they would never tell anyone who gave it to them. Anxiously, Abu Sufyan and those with him swore never to turn informant. Nu'aym then told them that the Jews were having second thoughts about their treatment of Muhammad (sa) and that they had sent word to him informing him of such. Nu'aym had caught their attention and proceeded to tell them that in order to repair their relationship they would take leaders from both the Koraysh and Ghatafan tribes as hostage and then deliver them to Muhammad so that he may put an end to them, and thereafter fight alongside him. Nu'aym further alarmed Abu Sufyan when he told him that the terms had been accepted. He concluded his devising with the warning that they, in his opinion, should not let anyone remain with the Krayzah, and so the seeds of mistrust were sown and took root. Abu Sufyan, together with the other chieftains met with those of the Ghatafan and decided to assess the loyalty of the Krayzah themselves rather than relying entirely upon the report of Nu'aym. However, in the interim period, both allies agreed to postpone telling Huyay about the matter. The allies agreed to send Ikrima to the Krayzah with a message. The message was brief and straight to the point and read, "Prepare yourselves to fight tomorrow so that we may rid ourselves of Muhammad." No sooner had the Krayzah received the message they sent one back saying, "Tomorrow is the Sabbath, and we will not fight with you against Muhammad unless you send us some of your men that we might hold until we have rid ourselves of him. It is our fear that if things go against us you will retreat and leave us to face him -- this, we cannot do alone." Ikrima returned in haste to Abu Sufyan and his fellow chieftains and the message was duly delivered. No sooner had the message been read they swore, "Nu'aym has told us the truth!" Immediately, another message was dispatched informing the Krayzah that they would not be sending any one but that they must fight all the same. The Krayzah's fears were confirmed and they sent back another message stating, yet again, that they would not fight until they received their demands. In a state of rage, Abu Sufyan went to confront Huyay. He demanded to know where the help was that his people promised, and told him that they had deserted him with the intent of betrayal. Huyay was taken aback by the accusation and swore by the Torah that the reason his fellow Jews would not take up arms against the Muslims was that it was the Sabbath and without doubt he would see them fight with all their might against the Prophet (sa) the day after. As of yet, Abu Sufyan had not told Huyay of the demand for hostages, but when he told him his reaction was indifferent and Abu Sufyan took it to be indicative of his guilt and swore by his god, al-lat, that the whole affair was nothing but treachery on both his part and theirs. Huyay swore yet again by the Torah that he was not a traitor, but Abu Sufyan refused to believe him, and so Huyay, fearing the wrath of Abu Sufyan, made a hasty retreat to the safety of the Krayzah

fortresses.

THE MORALE OF THE UNBELIEVERS

Two weeks had passed, and little except mistrust of one another had transpired among the Koraysh and its allies. Fodder was in very short supply, wounded mounts often died, and in addition, the weather turned to be exceptionally cold and wet. It was a time of frustration on their part. Many had hoped that by now the engagement would have been resolved and that they would be reaping the coveted spoils of war, but it wasn't so, and discontent became widespread.

THE MORALE OF THE BELIEVERS

The believers were better protected from the rain and the cold as they had the hill of Sal to shelter them. However, they were very tired on account of their constant vigil and signs of hunger were apparent, but unlike their adversaries, their morale was high and the Prophet (sa) supplicated to Allah after each obligatory prayer for three successive days for the unbelievers to be put to flight.

WIND AND RAIN

Added to the extreme cold and rain, Allah now sent unseen angels driving a bitterly cold wind from the east that brought torrential rain that forced the unbelievers to take shelter in their tents as the wind rushed howling between them. As the night progressed, the storm worsened to such a degree that their tents were ripped from the ground, tossed in the air and torn into shreds -- not one of the unbeliever's tents remained standing. Allah speaks of this in the Holy Koran saying:

"Believers, remember the Favor of Allah to you when there came against you hosts (armies), We unleashed against them a wind and hosts (of angels) you could not see. Allah sees the things you do." Koran 33:9

As for the Muslim tents, Allah protected them all and none were wrecked by the wind. As on many other occasions, the Prophet (sa) spent most of the night in prayer. After the conclusion of his final prayer, he visited a neighboring tent and asked Hudhayfah to go among the enemy and bring word of their condition. As Hudhayfah made his way towards the Koraysh encampment he found them shivering, huddled and crouched together trying to warm themselves as the winds roared about them. No one paid any attention to him and so he was able to get close to Abu Sufyan without being noticed. As dawn approached, the ferocity of the wind died down and the unbelievers started to try and warm themselves as Abu Sufyan cried out for all to hear, "People of the Koraysh, our horses and camels are dying, the Krayzah have let us down and betrayed us. We have suffered on account of the wind! Leave this place,

I intend leaving!" Abu Sufyan was so anxious to leave that he forgot his camel was still hobbled and made it rise on three legs. Just then, Ikrima called to him with the reminder that he was their chieftain and demanded to know if he was prepared to abandon his men, whereupon Abu Sufyan felt ashamed of his actions and dismounted. Everyone had had enough, and not long after the Koraysh army broke camp and started out on its long wearisome march home, however, Abu Sufyan remained behind with Khalid to ride behind his beleaguered army. As they rode together, Khalid had time to reflect upon the words of the Prophet (sa) and commented, "Any sensible person knows that Muhammad does not lie." Abu Sufyan was astonished and retorted, "You, of all people have lesser right to say such a thing!" Khalid asked why, whereupon he replied, "Muhammad belittled the honor of your father; he killed Abu Jahl your chieftain!" Everyone had been so busy with their own affairs that Hudhayfah was able to slip away unnoticed to where the Ghatafan had camped. When he reached their camp-site he found they had dispersed and so he returned to the Prophet (sa) with the welcome news, for the Prophet (sa) hated fighting as his preference was always that of inviting his adversaries to the mercy of Allah. When he reached the encampment he was told that the Prophet (sa) was praying, so Hudhayfah went to him and waited for him. The Prophet (sa) noticed is arrival and beckoned him to come and sit beside him as prayed. As Hudhayfah sat down, the Prophet (sa) covered him in the folds of his cloak to warm him, and there he remained until the prayer reached its conclusion. After the prayer, Hudhayfah related the blessed news of the enemies retreat and the Prophet (sa) immediately thanked Allah for His Mercy, for Prophet Muhammad (sa) was sent as a mercy for all people, not as a promoter of war. The thin thread of the light of dawn had appeared on the horizon so Bilal arose to call the believers to prayer. After the prayer was finished the believers turned to look in the direction of the enemy camp site - it was completely deserted. It was indeed a time for thanksgiving and rejoicing, so the Prophet (sa) gave his companions permission to break camp and return to their families. The immediate danger was over, however, the Prophet (sa) was still on guard. There was always the possibility that the unbelievers had retreated out of sight only to await news from the Krayzah that the trench had been abandoned. With this in mind the Prophet (sa) sent Jabir and Abdullah, Omar's son to call his men back. Jabir and Abdullah set off calling at the top of their voices telling them to return, but it was to no avail, so they returned to tell the Prophet (sa) what had happened but the Prophet (sa) just smiled and returned home himself with his close companions.

CHAPTER 89 THE AFTERMATH

It was noon, the obligatory prayer had been offered and the believers began to disperse. Not long after the prayer, Angel Gabriel came to the Prophet (sa) dressed in fine clothes. Upon his head he wore a turban of silver and gold brocade; the mule he rode was adorned with a saddle of velvet brocade. After the greeting, Gabriel asked the Prophet (sa) if he had laid down his arms, then informed him that the angels had not laid down theirs. He told him that he was on his way to cause the souls of the Krayzah to tremble in fear, then he told the Prophet (sa) that Allah, the Exalted, had sent him to deliver the command that he should

retaliate against treachery of the Krayzah.

THE SEIGE

Prophet Muhammad (sa) called upon his three thousand strong army to reassemble and informed them of the Command of Allah. The Messenger of Allah (sa) gave Ali the standard and instructed his followers not to offer the afternoon prayer until they reached the outlying fortresses of the Krayzah. However, Sa'ad who had been severely injured during the battle was not to accompany them but to remain behind in the tent that had, by the instruction of the Prophet (sa), been pitched inside the Mosque so that he could be near him. Just before sunset, the Muslims surrounded the fortresses and terror struck deep in the hearts of its inhabitants. The position remained unchanged for twenty-five nights until at last the Krayzah sent a message to the Prophet (sa) requesting Abu Lubabah, a tribesman from Aws with whom they had a long association, be allowed to consult with them. The Prophet (sa) agreed and Abu Lubabah went to the fortresses accompanied by several other companions who remained outside. As the doors to the fortress opened, Abu Lubabah was overcome by the plight of women and children crying and his heart softened toward them. For a brief moment, the fact that the Krayzah had betrayed the Prophet (sa) and had been willing to kill Muslims, including himself, slipped from his mind. It was almost like old times and together he and some of their elders climbed five flights of stairs to a room where they sat down to discuss the matter. After the usual pleasantries, the Krayzah asked whether or not he thought they should surrender, he told them that they should, but at the same time pointed to his throat indicating that they would be put to death. Suddenly, Abu Lubabah was jolted back to reality and horror stricken by his action and cried out with a verse from the Koran:

".. to You we turn, and to You is the arrival." Koran Ch.60:4

Meanwhile, outside the fortresses, Abu Lubabah's companions awaited his return, however, such was his deep shame and regret that he left the fortress by another entrance and returned to Medina alone. Upon reaching Medina, Abu Lubabah tied himself to a pillar in the Mosque saying that he would not move from it until Allah relented towards him. He remained tied to the pillar for either ten or fifteen days, only being released by his daughter when the time for prayer arrived. Prophet Muhammad (sa) waited patiently for his return, but not long after Abu Lubabah had tied himself to the pillar news of what transpired reach him. The Prophet (sa) told his companions that if he had come to him, he would have supplicated to Allah for his forgiveness, but as he had chosen this course of action there was nothing he could do until Allah pardoned him.

THE DILEMMA OF THE KRAYZAH

Amongst the Krayzah were several whose only barrier to their acceptance of the Prophet (sa) was that he was not a Jew. Ka'b now went to them and suggested that they accept the

Prophet (sa) and thereby save themselves as well as their property. However, they refused saying that the preferred death and would accept nothing else other than the Torah and the Law of Moses, peace be upon him. Ka'b was a resourceful man, and suggested several other solutions, but all proved unacceptable to his fellow tribesmen. Amr, Su'ads son, had been against breaking the pact right from the start and openly declared that he would not take part in its breaking. He now offered his fellow Jews a solution, but said he was unsure whether or not the Prophet (sa) would accept it. Amr suggested that they offer the Prophet (sa) a form of tax in exchange for their freedom. Like Ka'bs suggestions his was also rejected. That night, Amr left the fortress alone and made his way to Medina where he spent the night in the Mosque. What happened to him afterwards is unknown, however, the Messenger of Allah (sa) told his companions that Amr was a man whom Allah saved on account of his loyalty. Sometime before the siege, the three sons of Hadl, who was the brother of Krayzah himself, had come to visit relatives in the fortresses. They had been students of the elderly Syrian Jew, the son of Hayyaban, who had spoken so many times of the signs that would announce the coming the a new Prophet (sa). They remembered well his words and reminded their fellow Jews with them, but as before, their words fell on deaf ears. When they realized they would never convince them they decided to slip away in the still of the night and embrace Islam. As they left the fortress they told the Muslim guards of their intent and were guided to the camp. There was yet another person who left the fortresses, his name was Rifa'ah, Samawal's son. With stealth he managed to escape from the fortress unnoticed and slipped through the Muslim guards to the house of Salma, the daughter of Kays. Salma was the half sister of the Prophet's mother, Lady Aminah, who had married into the tribe of Khazraj, and it was there in her house that he embraced Islam.

THE END OF THE SIEGE

The next morning the Krayzah decided to surrender and opened the doors to the fortresses. The women and children were separated from the menfolk, taken to one sector of the camp and placed under the supervision of Abdullah, Salaam's son, who had once been their rabbi. In the meantime, the men's hands were tied behind their backs and led away to a different sector of the camp. The companions went inside the fortresses and brought out the spoils of war which were piled high outside the walls. Amongst the spoils was a plentiful supply of wine and fermented date juice, all were poured away, for Allah had forbidden Muslims to consume intoxicants.

THE REQUEST OF SA’AD, MU’ADHS SONS TRIBE

Many years before Islam, the Sa’ad, Mu’adhs son’s tribe established deep ties with the tribe of Krayzah and on that account they now went to the Prophet (sa) to ask him to extend the same kind of leniency he had shown to the tribe of Kaynuka, former allies of the Khazraj, two years before. The Prophet (sa) listened to them and asked if they would be satisfied if one of their own pronounced judgment upon their former allies and they accepted. The person the Prophet (sa) chose to pass judgment on the Krayzah was their chieftain, Sa’ad, Mu'adhs son

and so some of the companions returned to Medina to fetch him and found him being attended to in the Mosque by Rufaydah, a lady from the tribe of Aslam. A mule was prepared for Sa'ad and the party set off for the fortresses. During the course of the ride, Sa'ads companions told him that he was to pass judgment on their former allies and asked him to treat them well on that account. Sa'ad was not a person to let emotion interfere with justice. He had witnessed with his own eyes how those that had been taken captive at Badr and allowed to ransom themselves had ridden against them at Uhud, and yet again their treachery during the recent encounter. He was also aware of the tribe of Nadir's incitement of the Koraysh to take up arms against the Muslims, and seen how the Krayzah had been ready to follow the lead of their peers and broken their pact with the Prophet (sa). As Sa'ad approached the camp, the Prophet (sa) saw him and out of respect for Sa'ad said: "Stand up for your master" and told the tribesmen to greet their chieftain, which they did. Without wasting time, they approached Sa'ad saying, "Father of Amr, the Messenger of Allah (sa) has appointed you to judge our former allies." Sa'ad asked them to swear by Allah that they would accept his judgment, and this they did. The Prophet (sa) told Sa'ad that his judgment would also be binding upon himself. Then, Sa'ad proceeded to pronounce judgment saying, "It is my judgment that the men shall be killed, and the women and children taken captive." The Prophet (sa) turned to Sa'ad and said, "You have judged with the judgement of Allah from above the seven heavens." Shortly after, the women and children were escorted into the City. That night, the men of the Krayzah spent their time reciting the Torah and supporting one another in their decision. None, on account of racial pride, had the slightest wish to embrace Islam, and as they had done so many times before with the full support of their wives said that death was better for them than embracing Islam. The next morning trenches were dug in the market place and all except one of the Krayzah men were put to death. Huyay, who had once plotted to murder the Prophet (sa), then incited the Koraysh to rise up against him was also put to death with them. The only man to be spared was Zabir, Bata's son, an elderly man whose hatred of the Prophet (sa) and Islam was well known. His fate was yet to be determined because he had once spared the life of a Muslim named Thabit, Kays son, so Zabir was taken to Medina where he was lodged with the women and children. Although the women had strongly upheld the declaration of their husbands that they preferred death rather than embracing Islam, cries of grief and anger filled the air as Zabir told the women of the fate of their men. Zabir tried to quieten them but told them that if there had been any good in their men they would have been saved, then he urged the widows to seek refuge in their religion. Thabit went to the Prophet (sa) to ask him to spare the life of Zabir whereupon the Prophet (sa) granted his request. When Thabit told Zabir of his reprieve all Zabir would say was, "What is there left in life for an old man without a wife or children!" So Thabit went to the Prophet (sa) again and told him what Zabir said, so the Prophet (sa) mercifully told him to return his wife and children to him. Zabir was still unthankful and asked Thabit, "Is it possible for a family to survive without property?" Once again Thabit went to the Prophet (sa) and told him of Zabir's request and the Prophet (sa) ordered Zabir's that with the exception of his weapons and armor that all of his property be returned to him. Zabir's hatred of Islam had blinded him to the mercy and generosity now offered and so he went to Thabit yet again saying, "By Allah, I ask you Thabit, by your indebtedness to me that I should join my people. They are gone and

there is no good left in life." At first Thabit did not take him seriously, but when Zabir insisted, his request was granted. As for Zabir's wife and children, the Prophet’s mercy towards them still prevailed and they were freed under the protection of Thabit and retained their possessions. The captives were given to the believers who took part in the siege. Many were ransomed by their fellow tribesmen from Nadir and returned to live with them in Khybar. The Prophet took into his household, Rayhanah, who had married into the tribe of Krayzah from the tribe of Nadir. Rayhanah was housed with the Prophet's maternal aunt Salma. At first she opposed Islam, but as time went by her fellow Jews that had converted to Islam spoke to her about it and the veil was lifted from her heart. When Rayhanah embraced Islam the glad tidings were taken straight away to the Prophet (sa) who immediately set her free.

CHAPTER 90 THE DEATH OF SA’AD, MU’ADHS SON

Shortly after Sa’ad had pronounced sentence on the Krayzah he returned to the Mosque in Medina where his condition continued to deteriorate. The Prophet (sa) visited him frequently and then one night as he entered he found Sa’ad in a semi-unconscious state. He sat down near his head and tenderly cradled it close to his chest then supplicated saying, "O Allah, in sincerity Sa’ad has labored on the Path with Your Messenger attending to every aspect, take now his soul with the best acceptance in the way that You take the souls of Your creation." Sa’ad, who had supplicated sometime before that his soul should be taken if he had served his purpose, regained consciousness and opened his eyes and said in a weakened voice, "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah (sa), I bear witness that you have delivered your message." When Sa’ad was comfortable, the Messenger of Allah (sa) left his tent and a few hours later Angel Gabriel came to tell him that Sa’ad had passed away. The funeral arrangements were made and men, women and children walked in his funeral procession. As his bier was carried to his grave its bearers were surprised how light it seemed. When they reached the grave the bier was placed at its side and the Prophet (sa) led the funeral prayer. As Sa’ads bier was lowered into his grave the Prophet's face turned ashen and he exclaimed, "Exalted is Allah!" three times, whereupon the exaltation was taken up by the mourners. After a short pause the Prophet (sa) said, "Allah is the Greatest!" and once again his mourners repeated the exaltation. A little while after the funeral the Prophet (sa) was asked what had caused his face to suddenly turn ashen, whereupon he told his inquirer, "The grave closed in upon your companion and he felt constructed, and if any man could have escaped it, it would have been Sa’ad. Then, Allah relieved him from it." The bearers also commented to the Prophet (sa) upon the lightness of Sa’ads bier as he had been a large person and they expected it to have been heavier whereupon the Prophet (sa) told them that he had seen angels bearing his bier along with them.

THE FORGIVENESS OF ABU LUBABAH

Several days later, just before the dawn prayer when the Prophet (sa) was in the home of Lady Umm Salamah, he told her that he had received news that Abu Lubabah had been

forgiven. It was wonderful news and Lady Umm Salamah was given permission to convey it to him. Immediately, Lady Umm Salamah went to the door of her room that opened into the Mosque and called to Abu Lubabah saying, "Abu Lubabah, good news, Allah has relented toward you." Several men had already gathered in the Mosque to await the dawn prayer, when they heard the good news they raced toward him to untie the ropes, but Abu Lubabah stopped them saying, "Do not untie me, let the Messenger of Allah (sa) set met free with his own hands." When the Prophet (sa) entered the Mosque Abu Lubabah told him that he wished to give a third of his property in charity to atone for his action. The Prophet (sa) accepted and loosened the ropes that bound him and his property was given to the poor.

CHAPTER 91 THE KORAYSH CARAVAN

News reached Medina that a richly laden Koraysh caravan was homeward bound from Syria. When the Prophet (sa) learned of the news he placed Zayd in command of a cavalry of one hundred and seventy and sent them after it. The expedition was successful and the Koraysh merchandise confiscated, including silver that belonged to Safwan. There were also captives, but several managed to escape amongst whom was Al As, the son-in-law of the Prophet (sa). Shortly after the encounter, Al As who had lost everything, made his way to Medina where, his estranged wife, Lady Zaynab lived with their daughter Umama. Al As waited until all was still in the City and under the cover of night made his way to Lady Zaynab's house. Lady Zaynab was indeed surprised to see him after such a long time and invited him into her home. A while after, Bilal arose to call the believers to prayer and so Lady Zaynab left Al As and Umama in the house whilst she went to pray. After the Prophet (sa) had exalted Allah, their was a brief pause and Lady Zaynab announced for all to hear, "O people, I have given protection to Al As, Rabi's son." Then she joined the congregation in prayer.

THE PROTECTION OF THE WEAKEST IS BINDING

At the conclusion of the prayer the Prophet (sa) asked the congregation, "Did you hear what I heard? By Him in whose hand is my soul, I knew nothing of this until now. The protection of even the weakest Muslim is binding upon all other Muslims." Then the Prophet (sa) went to his daughter telling her to treat her estranged husband honorably but not to allow him the rights of a husband, because, by law he was no longer her husband. Lady Zaynab told her father that Al As, who was one of the most trusted men of Mecca, had gone to Syria on behalf of several Koraysh to trade for them and was deeply troubled because he had lost it all. The Prophet (sa) approached those who had confiscated his trusts saying, "This man is related to us, and his property has come to you. If you would like to return it to him that would please me, but if you choose not to, then it is bounty which Allah has given you and you have a better right to it." None of the companions choose to keep the merchandise and everything was handed back to him, including old water-skins, some small leather bottles and a few pieces of wood.

A STANDARD TO BE EMULATED

Now that everything had been returned one of the companions asked him, "Why don't you enter Islam and keep these things for yourself; they are the property of idolaters?" But Al As replied, "If I did such a thing then my entrance into Islam would not be good and I would have betrayed my trust." Shortly afterward, Al As took his leave from his family and set off to Mecca. Upon reaching Mecca, Al As wasted no time and distributed his trust whilst asking everyone if they considered they had received their dues. Everyone was in agreement that everything was in order whereupon he returned to Medina to embrace Islam and was reunited once more with his wife and daughter.

CHAPTER 92 THE TRIBE OF MUTALIK

Needless to say, the successful raid against the Syrian caravan was a thorn in the side of the Koraysh. Some time before, the Koraysh had allied themselves with the tribe of Mutalik, a branch of the Khuzah whose territory lay along the coast of the Red Sea. The Koraysh now approached the Mutalik urging them to attack Medina with the hope that their kindred tribes would support them. However, the Koraysh had not realized that the other tribes inclined more to the Muslims than they did toward themselves and it wasn't long until the news reached Medina of the intended attack. The Mutalik were unaware of the fact that the Prophet (sa) knew anything about their plans so they took their time before even starting to prepare themselves for the encounter. Meanwhile, the Prophet (sa) decided not to wait for them to make the first move and ordered his forces to march to the Mutalik territory. The forthcoming encounter was not expected to be very dangerous so the Prophet (sa) allowed Ladies Ayesha and Umm Salama to accompany him. Eight days later he reached the Mutalik territory and, unknown to the Mutalik, struck camp near a watering hole. The element of surprise was a great advantage and it wasn't long until they were able to surround their settlement. Some of the Mutalik warriors took up arms and fought, ten were killed, however, there was very little resistance, and only one Muslim was martyred. The spoils of war were considerable, just under two hundred families were taken captive, and large herds of two thousand camels and five thousand sheep and goats confiscated. Amongst those that had ridden out with the Prophet (sa) were hypocrites. They were not ill-disposed to join him on account of the brevity of the march with the expectancy of reward for their minimal effort. However, they resented the fact that they would be obliged to share the spoils with the impoverished Muhajir who they considered to be intruders, and were of the opinion that all should belong the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. Two days after the encounter, a dispute over the ownership of a bucket erupted between two coastal tribesmen, one from the Ghifar and the other from the Juhaynah. Omar had hired the services of the tribesman from the Ghifar who wrongfully laid claim to the bucket and struck its owner, but, he shouted out to the Muhajir for help whilst the Juhaynah tribesman called upon his long-time allies from the Khazraj to support him. Both the Ansars and Muhajir came running, swords were drawn and had it not been for the quick intervention of the Prophet's closer companions, the matter might have got out of hand. In another part of

the camp, Abdullah, Ubay's son, was sitting with some of his close friends as the disturbance broke out and asked one of them to go and find out about it. His companion returned and told him that the trouble had been initiated by Omar's man and this added further to his contempt. Abdullah, was a proud man and felt that the power of leadership should have fallen into his hands and resented the Prophet's presence among. Not long before, he had seen his Jewish allies, who betrayed the Prophet (sa) during the recent encounter at the Trench, punished and now this incident had occurred. He refused to take into account that the incident had been settled fairly and disregarded the established fact that the Prophet (sa) would never entertain injustice, no matter whether the complainers were Muslim or not. After having listened to his companion he became enraged and urged, "Spend nothing on those who follow the Messenger of Allah (sa) until they have dispersed!" Then exclaimed, "If we return to the City, the strong will expel the more humiliated!" Zayd, Arkam's son, a Khazraj youth, heard Abdullah and went straight to the Prophet (sa) to report the matter. The Prophet's displeasure was clear upon his face whereupon Omar expressed his opinion that Abdullah should be dealt with as a traitor, but the Prophet (sa) spoke gently and replied, "Omar, what would happen if it is said that Muhammad kills his companions?" An Ansar heard the boy's report and went to Abdullah to ask if the report was correct. Abdullah was shaken to learn that his intent had been reported and went directly to the Prophet (sa) and denied the matter on oath. A small crowd had gathered around the Prophet (sa), amongst whom were some people of the Khazraj who stood up for Abdullah and made Zayd look appear as a liar which upset him greatly. The situation was tense, so the Prophet (sa) in his wisdom temporarily dismissed the incident and unexpectedly gave orders to break camp. The timing was unusual as it was not his custom to march in the middle of the day when the heat was at its worst. Apart from a few short stops for prayer, the march continued until well past the mid-morning of the following day when the combination of both heat and tiredness compelled them to stop and they were too exhausted to continue their quarrel. During the march, the Prophet (sa) told Sa’ad, Ubadah's son, that he believed Zayd had spoken the truth, whereupon Sa’ad said, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), if you wish you can drive him out, for indeed he is the lower and the weaker, and you are the higher and mightier!" However, the Prophet (sa) did not respond and let it pass until he received a new Revelation, which was the short chapter called "The Hypocrites". In it Allah exonerates Zayd and quotes the words of Abdullah, Ubayy's son.

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful "When the hypocrites come to you they say: ‘We bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah.’ Allah knows that you (Prophet Muhammad) are indeed His Messenger, and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are truly liars! They have taken their oaths as a cover and barred others from the Path of Allah. Evil is what they have done. That is because they believed, then disbelieved, because of this a seal has been set upon their hearts so they are unable to understand. When you see them their bodies please you, but when they speak and you listen to their sayings, they are like propped-up timber. Every shout (they hear) they take it to be against them. They are the enemy - be wary of them. Allah kills them! How perverse they are! When it is said to them: ‘Come, the Messenger of Allah will ask forgiveness for you,’ they turn their heads in pride and you see them go away. It is equal for them whether you ask for their forgiveness or you do not ask for

their forgiveness, Allah will not forgive them. Allah does not guide the evildoers. It is they that say: 'Spend nothing on those who follow the Messenger of Allah until they disperse.' Yet to Allah belong the treasuries of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand. They say: 'If we return to the City, the strong will expel the humiliated.' But the might belongs to Allah, and His Messenger and the believers, but the hypocrites do not know. Believers, do not let either your possessions or your children divert you from the Remembrance of Allah. Those who do that shall be the losers. So spend of that with which We have provided you before death comes upon any of you and he then says: 'O my Lord, if only You would defer me to a near term, so that I could give in charity and be among the good-doers.' But Allah will never defer any soul when its term comes. Allah is Aware of what you do." Koran Chapter 63

However, the Prophet (sa) did not recite this new chapter until after his return to Medina. Meanwhile, Zayd continued to ride on in misery dwelling upon the hurt that anyone could even think that he would lie to the Messenger of Allah (sa). The Prophet (sa) understood how very sad Zayd was feeling, so he rode up to him, and spoke in a gentle, comforting voice that no other could hear saying, "Your ear heard the truth; Allah has confirmed it." Zayd's misery vanished, he was so very happy, but knew he must not say a word about it until after Prophet Muhammad (sa) had made known the truth. Abdullah's son knew that his father had lied, he also knew that Omar had asked the Prophet (sa) to deal with him as a traitor and was afraid of his tribes reaction should it be carried out. With this in mind he went to the Prophet (sa) and told him that he knew of Omar's opinion and asked that if it was proven to be true, that he be permitted to be his father's executioner. He told the Prophet (sa) that if anyone else were to do it, that every time he saw that person he would want to kill him and thereby be responsible for killing a believer for the sake of an unbeliever and enter Hell. But the Prophet (sa) told him that this was not his intention to harm him and said: "Let us deal with him gently and make the best of his company while he is with us." When they reached Medina, the Prophet (sa) called for the hypocrites so that he might ask for their forgiveness but they turned away in arrogance; and the Prophet (sa) recited the newly revealed chapter that exposed them.

CHAPTER 93 THE NECKLACE OF LADY AYESHA

At sunset, a few days after the forced march, the Prophet (sa) called for his men to halt to offer the evening prayer. Lady Ayesha's camel was made to kneel and as she dismounted the weakened clasp of the onyx necklace her mother had given her on her wedding day came undone and her necklace fell off. She did not notice it was missing for sometime but when she did she became very sad. The sun had set and it was impossible to find it even though she tried very hard. It had been the Prophet's intention not to stay long at the halt as there was no water for miles around and there was very little water left in their water-skins, but knowing how upset Lady Ayesha was he gave the order that they would remain there that night. News of the loss of Lady Ayesha's necklace circulated amongst the companions and on account of

the lack of water there was much concern about their ability to offer the dawn prayer the following morning. They wondered if they would have to delay saying the prayer for it would be necessary for everyone to renew their ablution. That night, Allah in His Mercy sent a new Revelation that spoke of an alternate way in which one might make ablution when water was unavailable:

"If you are ill or on a journey, or if any of you come from the toilet or you have touched (had intercourse with) women, and you cannot find water, so touch pure dust and wipe your faces and your hands. Allah is the Pardoner, the Forgiver." Koran 4:43

The Prophet (sa) recited the new verse to his followers and demonstrated how to make the dry kind of ablution, tayamun, with pure, unpolluted dust and the Muslims rejoiced at not having to delay the Dawn prayer. After having heard this Revelation, Usayd went to Abu Bakr telling him that it was not the first blessing they had received on his account. It was daybreak, the prayer had been offered and there was still no sign of the necklace. It was time to move and as Lady Ayesha's camel got up, there, lying underneath it lay her necklace.

THE RACE

As they journeyed back to Medina they came across a valley in which it was decided to camp and the two tents of the Prophet (sa) were erected some distance away from the others. Lady Ayesha, who was young and full of energy, invited the Prophet (sa) to race with her as he had done in Mecca before the migration, and so they raced with one another. This time the Prophet (sa) won the race whereupon he said, "This is for the other race, the one in which you were the winner." Later, Lady Ayesha explained that one day, when she was little, the Prophet (sa) went to visit her father and saw she had something in her hand. He asked her to bring it to him, but in her playfulness she would not and had run away from him whereupon the Prophet (sa) pretended to run after her, but let her get away.

THE LAST STAGE OF THE JOURNEY

Medina was but a few stops away when the order to halt was given. Once more, during their rest period, the clasp of Lady Ayesha's necklace came undone and slipped from her without notice. The time had come to resume the march, but just before she mounted her howdah she felt the need to answer the call of nature and slipped away far from everyone's sight. When she returned, Lady Umm Salamah and herself seated themselves inside their individual howdahs and drew the curtains around them as they waited for them to be lifted up on to the back of their camels. To her great alarm, as Lady Ayesha was making herself comfortable she realized her necklace had slipped yet again and so she left her howdah to go and look for it. Everyone was busy with their own affairs and nobody noticed her leave the howdah. Whilst she searched for the necklace the howdahs were mounted onto the camels, and no one realized that she was not inside, and the order to march was given. Lady Ayesha found her

necklace but when she returned everyone had left. She didn't know what to do for the best so she thought if she remained where her howdah had been, then, sooner or later, someone would be sure to notice she wasn't with them and realize that she had been left behind at the last halt, and as she waited she was overcome by tiredness and fell sound asleep. Safwan, Muattal’s son had been designated to trail behind the army. His duties were to be on the look out for any possible threat from the rear and to retrieve any item that may have either been left behind or dropped as the army marched on ahead. The hours passed by and as Safwan drew near to the last camp he noticed a figure asleep in the sand and decided to investigate. When he reached the camp he dismounted from his camel and went over to the sleeper. Lady Ayesha was not wearing her veil so he was able to recognize her as he had seen her before the Prophet's wives were obliged to wear the veil. As soon as he realized who the sleeping person was he exclaimed, "Indeed we are for Allah, and to Him we return. It is the wife of the Messenger of Allah !" Until that moment Lady Ayesha had remained asleep, but upon hearing his voice she woke up and quickly drew the veil over her face. She was relieved to see him and Safwan offered her his camel and walked on foot as he led the camel on to the next halt. At the next halt, the howdahs had been lifted from the camels and set down upon the sand. When Lady Ayesha did not come out of her howdah it was presumed she must have fallen asleep, and no one thought anymore about it. It was almost time to resume the march, when to everyone's astonishment Safwan entered the camp leading Lady Ayesha riding on his camel. Neither the Prophet (sa) nor the companions thought anymore about the incident, they were glad that she was safe and sound, but the tongues of the hypocrites, ever searching for a way to harm the holy family, started to concoct slanderous lies about Lady Ayesha and Safwan.

THE DIVISION OF THE SPOILS OF WAR

Upon their return to Medina the spoils of war were distributed evenly amongst those that had taken part in the campaign. Among those taken captive was Juwayriyah, the daughter of Harith, chief of the Mutalik. Juwayriyah had been given to an Ansar who decided to ask a high ransom for her release on account of her father’s rank. Juwayriyah was troubled by the price so she went to the Prophet (sa), who was staying in the apartment of Lady Ayesha that day, to request him to intervene on her behalf. Meanwhile, Juwayriyah's father learned of his daughter's position and set off with his sons for Medina with a fine herd of camels to ransom her. However, when he reached the valley of Atik his love of two extremely fine camels prompted him to keep them and not to offer them as part of the ransom, so he hid them with the intent of retrieval after he had secured his daughter's release. When Harith reached Medina he went to the Prophet (sa) and offered the camels, but much to his astonishment and that of his sons, the Prophet (sa) inquired, "Where are the other camels?" Then he proceeded to tell Harith the exact place where they were hidden in the valley of Atik. Harith and his sons were completely overcome, for no one except the three knew what they had done nor yet where they had hidden the camels. Harith and his sons exclaimed, "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah!" The two camels were fetched and given to the Prophet (sa) and Juwayriyah was returned to her father, and like her

father, she too embraced Islam. Tribal ties had been strengthened enormously through the bonds of the Prophet's marriages and the Prophet (sa) offered to marry Juwayriyah. Juwayriyah accepted and an apartment was added to those of her co-wives. When the Ansars and Muhajirs learned that the Prophet (sa) was going to take Lady Juwayriyah to be his wife they released all the unransomed captives, of whom there were approximately one hundred families, and Lady Ayesha was heard to say, "I know of no woman, who was a greater blessing to her tribe than her."

CHAPTER 94 THE VICIOUS LIE

Soon after their return, Lady Ayesha was taken ill and during this time the slanderous lies the hypocrites concocted started to circulate throughout the City. The majority of Muslims refused to accept or even listen to them, however, there were a few including Lady Ayesha's own cousin, Mistah, who believed and helped to spread the rumor. Despite the fact that everyone in Medina knew about the rumors, Lady Ayesha remained completely unaware, and when her illness worsened she asked the Prophet's permission to return to her mother so that she might look after her and the Prophet (sa) agreed. Twenty days after she had gone to stay with her mother, her illness abated. One evening, shortly thereafter, as she was walking with her paternal aunt, Mistah's mother, her aunt's foot became entangled in her gown and caused her to stumble, whereupon she surprised Lady Ayesha with her exclamation, "May Mistah stumble!" Lady Ayesha exclaimed, "Allah! That is not a good thing to say about a Muhajir who fought at Badr!" Then it dawned upon her aunt that Lady Ayesha knew nothing of the rumors and asked, "Haven't you heard what is being said?" Lady Ayesha was puzzled and replied that she had no idea what she referred too whereupon her aunt broke the news of the vicious lies the hypocrites and her son were spreading about her. Lady Ayesha could not believe her ears and exclaimed, "Can this be so!" and with deep regret her aunt swore by Allah that it was. Lady Ayesha burst into tears and returned home sobbing so much that later on she said that she feared her liver would split. When she reached home she went straight to her mother saying, "May Allah forgive you, people talk, yet you did not tell me anything of it!" Her mother did her best to comfort her but it did nothing to alleviate the great sorrow and hurt she felt as she lay awake all night sobbing her young, innocent heart out. Prophet Muhammad (sa) knew Lady Ayesha to be innocent of the charges but had to wait for a Revelation to be sent down that would exonerate her before everyone. In the meantime he approached his wives and asked their opinion of her so as to confound the whisperings of satan. Without exception all praised Lady Ayesha saying that they only knew good things about her. The following morning when the Prophet (sa) was in the Mosque he climbed the pulpit, praised Allah then said, "O people, what do you say of men who seek to hurt me with regard to my family by spreading untruths about them? By Allah, I know nothing but good about my household, and nothing but good about the man they mention who has never entered a house of mine except that I was with him." As soon as the words had left the Prophet's mouth, Usayd jumped up and said, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), if they are from the Aws, we will deal with them; but if they are from our Khazraj brothers then command us -- they should be killed!" Amongst the chief

perpetrators other than Mistah, and ibn Ubayy, was Hamnah, and Hassan, Thabit's son from the Khazraj. When Sa'ad, heard Usayd's words he exclaimed, "You will not kill them, nor can you. You would not have spoken like this if they had been your people! A heated argument broke out as Usayd said, "We will kill them, and you are a hypocrite to take their side! The Prophet (sa) intervened and quieted them down and they left the Mosque in peace. A well intentioned person thought Lady Ayesha would be comforted when she learned of the kind words her co-wives had said about her when the Prophet (sa) inquired about her. However, it caused her greater distress as she began to wonder whether he had asked them because he distrusted her. Had she also been told about the events in the Mosque she would have realized otherwise but she remained unaware. Lady Ayesha wept continuously for two days and nights during which time one of the ladies from the Ansar came to visit her and she too sat and wept with her. A while later, the Prophet (sa) came to visit her and sat down and said, "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah," then he explained the situation to her saying compassionately, "O Ayesha, I have heard such and such a thing concerning you. Allah will surely declare the innocence of the innocent. Should it be that you have done something that is wrong, then repent to Allah, for Allah is the Receiver of repentance." When Lady Ayesha heard these words she stopped crying and asked her father to speak on her behalf, but he said, "I do not know how to reply." She asked her mother to do the same, but like her husband she did not know how to reply. Lady Ayesha, who was still extremely distressed, replied with the best reply against the slanderers and quoted the words Prophet Jacob had uttered when Joseph's brothers claimed that a wolf had devoured him:

" ... 'But come sweet patience! The help of Allah is always there to seek against that which (some of) you describe.'" Koran 12:18

then she went and laid down upon her couch, hoping all the while that Allah would clarify the matter. Such was her humility that she did not expect to be worthy of a Revelation being sent down proclaiming her innocence, but she hoped that the Prophet (sa) would see a vision that would exonerate her. Not long after Lady Ayesha had laid down Allah sent Gabriel with a Revelation of exoneration to the Prophet (sa) whereupon he called to her with great happiness, "O Ayesha, praise Allah, for He has announced your innocence."

"... those who came with slander were a number of you. Do not regard it evil for you, rather it is good for you. Every person of them shall have the sin that he has earned charged to him. As for he who took upon himself the greater part there is a mightier punishment." Koran 24:11

The Revelation spoke not only of Lady Ayesha's innocence but the punishment of those who slander innocent women. The verses Allah sent down regarding the punishment of slanderers reads:

"Those who accuse chaste women and cannot produce four witnesses, you shall lash them with eighty lashes. And never accept their testimony, for they are evildoers, except those

among them that afterwards repent and mend their ways. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." Koran 24:4-5

And so in compliance with the Word of Allah, those that admitted taking part in the slander were punished. As for the hypocrites, they did not admit their part, so the Prophet (sa) left them alone committing their affair to Allah. Prior to the slandering, Abu Bakr it had been his custom to give his nephew, Mistah, who was poor, an allowance. Now that Mistah's mischief had been revealed he swore by Allah never to give him anything again on account of the harm he had caused. But, unknown to him at that time, Allah had sent down another verse that instructs:

"Do not let those of you who possess bounty and plenty swear not to give kinsmen and the poor and those who emigrate in the Way of Allah. Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not yearn that Allah forgives you? And Allah is the Forgiver, the Most Merciful." Koran 24:22

When this verse was recited to Abu Bakr he exclaimed, "Indeed, I yearn that Allah forgives me," and went to Mistah to give him his allowance saying, "I swear that I will never again withhold it from him!"

CHAPTER 95 THE DEATH OF UBAYD ALLAH, SON OF JAHSH

A month or so before Ramadan, news reached Medina that Ubayd Allah, the son of Jahsh had died. Before Ubayd Allah's conversion he had been a Christian but when he and his wife Umm Habibah, Abu Sufyan's daughter converted to Islam, they had been among those that migrated to Abyssinia to escape persecution. However, much to Umm Habibah's deep distress her husband reverted to Christianity and died as such.

CHAPTER 96 THE PRELUDE TO THE OPENING OF MECCA

"The first House ever to be built for people was at Bakkah (Mecca) blessed and a guidance for the worlds. In it there are clear signs; The station where Abraham stood. Whoever enters it let him be safe. Pilgrimage to the House is a duty to Allah For all who can make the journey. And whosoever disbelieves, Allah is Rich, independent of all the worlds." Koran 3:96-97

The blessed month of Ramadan had come and gone. Not long after the Prophet (sa) had a vision in which he saw himself with his head shaven entering Ka'ba with its key. When the Prophet (sa) told his companions of the vision great elation spread amongst the majority when he announced his intention to lead them on pilgrimage to the Sacred House. However, there were some hypocrites that decided they would not to go with him on account of the fact that there would be no spoils of war to bring home. It had been several years since the would-be pilgrims had been able to visit the House of Allah. Their hearts yearned to offer their prayers

at the Ka'ba once more and so preparations commenced with the white robes of pilgrimage being made ready and the purchase of seventy sacrificial camels to be offered upon the completion of the pilgrimage. The Prophet (sa) prepared himself by shaving his head and dressed in the same white clothes that all the other pilgrims wore, then, lots were cast to see which of his wives should accompany him and the lot fell in favor of Lady Umm Salamah. Although the pilgrimage was to take place in one of the sacred months, months in which all forms of hostilities are strictly forbidden, Sa'ad Ubadah's son and Omar were of the opinion that they should, nevertheless, go fully armed to protect themselves just in case the Koraysh should take advantage of their vulnerability, and try to attack them. The Prophet (sa) was not agreeable to the suggestion and declared, "I will not carry arms, I go only to offer the pilgrimage." When the day arrived, one thousand, four hundred pilgrims left Medina for Mecca dressed in regular attire. At the first halt the Prophet (sa) asked for one of the sacrificial camels to be brought to him, as it stood before him he made the intention to sacrifice it, then, adorned it with garlands around its neck, after which he marked it on its right side and told the pilgrims that they should do likewise. After the dedication of the camels many pilgrims dressed themselves in their white robes in preparation for making their personal intention to offer their pilgrimage. However, some delayed as they intended to hunt as once a pilgrim puts on his pilgrimage robes hunting is no longer permissible to him until the completion of the pilgrimage. Those now dressed in pilgrim's robes followed the example of the Prophet (sa) saying, "Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk," which means, "Here I am O Allah, obedient to You," a supplication which is made by every pilgrim since the time of Prophet Abraham up to this day. Shortly after the dedication of the camels, the Prophet (sa) sent a man from the tribe of Khuzah -- a branch of the tribe of Ka'b -- to observe the reaction of the Koraysh.

THE KORAYSH LEARN OF THE INTENDED PILGRIMAGE

As soon as the word reached Mecca of the Muslims intent to offer their pilgrimage at Ka'ba they were gripped in a state of panic. The fact that those who reported their approach told them that they bore no arms, that is, with the exception of a few carrying their sheathed hunting knives, which could not, by any means, be taken as a threat against them, did not help the matter. Shortly after their approach had been announced, the Koraysh chieftains called for a meeting of the utmost urgency in the House of Assembly to establish the course of action they should take.

TWO FACTORS

There were two factors at stake; since the time of, Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, the Ka'ba had always been a place where pilgrims from all over Arabia and beyond had been free to come to offer their pilgrimage. The Koraysh had, since the very early days, been the guardians of Ka'ba and never in the history of Mecca had a pilgrim been prevented from entering the City. The opposite had always been the case, they had been welcomed and afforded the traditional hospitality of food and water which was an obligatory honor upon the tribes of the Koraysh. The problem that now presented itself was if the Koraysh refused to permit the

Muslims to offer their pilgrimage, their much coveted honor would be at stake, and soon all Arabia would learn of their refusal to admit the Muslim pilgrims. On the other hand if they let the Muslims enter Mecca it would be yet another moral victory for them especially in the light of their recently failed attempt to conquer Medina. After great deliberation it was agreed that despite their situation, on no account would they permit them to enter Mecca, and so Khalid -- who had led the Koraysh against the Muslims at Uhud -- with a cavalry of two hundred was dispatched to prevent the Muslims from entering the City.

KHALID'S ATTEMPT TO STOP THE PROPHET (sa) ENTERING MECCA

The Khuzah scout rejoined his fellow pilgrims at a place called Usfan and related the news of Khalid's intended blockade to the Prophet (sa). Upon learning their plans the Prophet (sa) enlisted the help of a pilgrim from the tribe of Aslam, who knew the area well, to lead them through the rugged mountain passes away from Khalid and then down into Mecca. It wasn't until it was too late that Khalid spotted a cloud of dust in the distance that he realized the Muslims had taken the mountain route, a route virtually impossible for him and his men to pursue, so with all haste he sped back to Mecca to warn the Koraysh of their approach via the mountains. The journey through the mountains proved to be both tiring and arduous, however it was of no concern to the pilgrims. When they reached easier terrain the Prophet (sa) turned to the pilgrims and told them to supplicate saying, "We ask Allah to forgive us and we repent to Him", and with humble hearts the pilgrims supplicated.

HUDAYBIYAH

Upon reaching a place called Hudaybiyah, which lies not far from Mecca on the boundaries of the sacred land, the Prophet's favorite camel, Kaswa -- the camel he had ridden during his migration to Medina several years before -- suddenly knelt down and refused to go any further. At first the pilgrims thought she must be tired or perhaps a little stubborn, but the Prophet (sa) told them, "The same Power that prevented the elephant from entering Mecca is now preventing us," whereupon the Prophet (sa) gave the instructions to strike camp.

THE MIRACLE OF THE WATER

As the pilgrims set about striking camp, some went in search of water. Eventually they came across a well, however, it was almost dry so they returned to inform the Prophet (sa) whereupon he returned with them to the well. Upon reaching it he sat down beside it, then blew some salvia in to the well and supplicated. Suddenly, water gushed forth and the pilgrims filled their water-skins and watered their animals. When the need for more water arose, some of the pilgrims went to the Prophet (sa) to inform them of their circumstances. As they approached they saw the Prophet (sa) completing his ablution with water that had been poured into a vessel. After he had finished his companions told him that they had no more water and that his ablution water was all that remained. Upon hearing this, the Prophet (sa)

dipped his hands into the vessel and water began to flow from his fingers, just like springs, so that the need of each and every pilgrim was satisfied.

THE CHIEFTAIN'S GIFT

The Prophet (sa) had been given a gift of some camels and sheep by two Bedouin chieftains from the tribe of Khuzah and so the animals were slaughtered and the pilgrims ate their fill. The tribe of Khuzah had not as a whole entered the fold of Islam although they inclined towards it as did their branch tribes of Aslam, Mustalik and Ka'b, however, they had allied themselves to the Prophet (sa). The alliance not only benefited the Muslims but also the Khuzah as they had, for many years, been adversaries of the Bani Bakr who had strengthened their position by allying themselves to the Koraysh. These alliances were, within the course of a short time, destined to play a crucial role between the Muslims and the Koraysh.

THE PEACEFUL WAYS OF THE PROPHET (sa)

A man by the name of Budayl and his companions who inclined towards the Prophet (sa) happened to be in Mecca during this time so they left Mecca and made their way to Hudaybiyah to inform the Prophet (sa) of the hostile atmosphere. When they reached him they told him, "They are swearing by Allah that they will never leave a way open between you and the House until all their warriors lie dead!" The Prophet (sa) told Budayl, "We did not come here to fight, we come only to offer the circumambulation around the House. Whosoever tries to prevent us, we will oppose, but I will give them time to make their arrangements to leave the way unhindered for us." In an effort to mediate, Budayl and his companions returned to Mecca only to be shunned by many. They approached Ikrima, son of the infamous Abu Jahl and tried to tell them of the Prophet's position, but he refused to listen. However, Safwan and Urwah happened to be present and told Ikrima that his attitude was unreasonable whereupon Safwan asked Budayl to tell him what had transpired at Hudaybiyah. Budayl told them that the Prophet's intent was none other than peaceful, and that he was prepared to give the Koraysh sufficient time to prepare themselves for their entrance. Urwah was of the opinion that the proposal was fair and that if it was not accepted it would harm them. He further suggested that he would go to the Prophet (sa), both as an envoy and as a scout, observe for himself the attitude of the pilgrims, return, and give them his opinion. His proposal was accepted and Urwah left for Hudaybiyah.

THE MISCALCULATED INSULT

In the meantime, the Koraysh, who had allied themselves to the tribes of Ahabish, asked one if its chieftains named Hulays, from the tribe of Al Harith, a branch of the Kinanah, to also go and investigate. Hulays had taken part in the encounter at Uhud but had been appalled by Abu Sufyan's mutilation of the bodies of fallen Muslims; he was also known to be a man that respected religious rites. As the Prophet (sa) saw him approaching, he told the pilgrims to let

the sacrificial camels wander freely towards him and this they did. When Hulays saw the garland camels coming towards him, it was enough to convince him that the intent was indeed peaceful and so he returned to Mecca. Upon his return he gave them his opinion, however, the Koraysh rebuked him harshly, and referred to him as being incapable of assessing the situation saying he was no more than a desert Arab, who knew little of these kind of affairs. It was a miscalculated insult. With authority Hulays responded, "People of Koraysh, by Allah, it was not for this that we allied ourselves with you, neither are we with you in this concern. When someone comes to honor the House of Allah should they be barred from it? By Him in whose hand is my soul, you either let Muhammad do what he has come to do, or, I will withdraw each and every man of the Ahabish!" The Koraysh had not reckoned upon Hulays' response and now pleaded with him to delay taking action until they had chance to draw up terms acceptable to both parties.

URWAH'S AUDIENCE WITH THE PROPHET (sa)

By now, Urwah had reached the Prophet's camp and made straight for his tent. Urwah was made welcome and as they sat together Urwah addressed the Prophet (sa) at his own level and grasped hold of the Prophet's beard. Mughirah, who was standing near the Prophet (sa) tapped Urwah's hand gently with the flat of his sheathed sword as a warning and Urwah removed his hand. The conversation was quite lengthy and Urwah forgot himself again and once more took hold of the Prophet's beard whereupon Mughirah tapped him a little harder but this time said, "Take your hand from the Messenger of Allah's beard while it is still yours to take!" Urwah removed his hand immediately and did not forget his manners again.

HOW ALL MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS SHOULD RESPECT AND HONOR THE PROPHET (sa)

Urwah was constantly on his guard for signs of hidden hostility, however, he found none whatsoever and was very impressed by the way in which the Muslims respected and honored the Prophet (sa). Upon his return to Mecca he addressed the Koraysh saying, "I have been sent as an envoy to kings; to Chosroes and to the Negus, but I have never seen a king whose subjects honored any one of them as the followers of Muhammad honor Muhammad. When he orders anything they vie with one another to fulfill it. When he makes his ablution they almost fight over the remaining water. When he speaks, they become quiet and refrain from looking at him straight in the face, rather, they lower their eyes in humility before him. He has offered us a fair compromise, so accept it from him."

IKRIMA'S TREATMENT OF KHIRASH

Whilst Urwah was in the Prophet's camp, the Prophet (sa) had sent yet another envoy, on camel-back, by the name of Khirash from the tribe of Ka'b to Mecca. Khirash was met by Ikrima who wasted no time killing his camel and was about to turn on Khirash when Hulays and some of his tribesmen saw what had happened, restrained Ikrima and demanded that he

should be allowed to return to the Prophet (sa).

OTHMAN NEGOTIATES WITH THE KORAYSH

When Khirash returned to the camp he went immediately to the Prophet (sa) and told him what had happened then advised him saying, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), send someone to them who is more respected than myself." The Prophet (sa) accepted his humble advice and called upon Omar, but Omar reminded him that the Koraysh were very hostile towards him and that there was no one in his own tribe strong enough to lend his support. Omar then suggested that Othman, Arfan’s son, should go on account of the fact that he was not only highly respected amongst many of their tribesmen but also wise. The Prophet (sa) agreed and Othman made his way to Mecca to reason with the Koraysh. The days went by, and the pilgrims waited patiently for his return. Each day they looked anxiously for his return until they began to fear that something evil had befallen him.

THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

It was during this time that the Prophet (sa) called his followers around him under an acacia tree and asked them to renew their oath of allegiance. The first to give his oath was Sinan from the tribe of Khuzaymah, the Prophet (sa) extended his left hand and held it with his right hand saying, "I pledge my allegiance for Othman", then, one by one the Muslims renewed their oath of allegiance.

“To Allah belong the armies of the heaven and the earth. Allah is the Almighty and the Wise. We have sent you (Prophet Muhammad) as a witness and as a bearer of glad tidings and warning, so that you believe in Allah and His Messenger and that you support him, revere him, and exalt Him, at the dawn and in the evening. Those who swear allegiance to you swear allegiance to Allah. The Hand of Allah is above their hands. He who breaks his oath breaks it against his self, but for he that keeps his covenant made with Allah, Allah shall give him a mighty wage. The Bedouins who lagged behind will say to you: ‘We were occupied with our possessions and families, so ask Allah to forgive us.’ But they say with their tongues what they do not mean in their hearts. Say: ‘Who can help you against Allah if it is that He wills harm for you or desires benefit for you? Allah is Aware of what you do.’ No, you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families, and this was made to seem fair in your hearts so you harbored evil thoughts, and so you are a destroyed nation. But whosoever disbelieves in Allah and His Messenger, We have prepared a Blazing Fire for the unbelievers. To Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He forgives whom He will and punishes whom He will. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. Koran 48:4-14

OTHMAN’S RESPECT FOR THE PROPHET (sa)

Not long after the pledging Othman returned unharmed. He had been well received but the

Prophet's request had been rejected, however he had been given the opportunity to offer his own personal pilgrimage but out of respect for the Prophet (sa) he declined.

THE THWARTED PLAN

Meanwhile, some of the Koraysh set out from Mecca with the intent of initiating a surprise attack upon the Muslims. However, their plans were thwarted and the aggressors brought before the Prophet (sa), who justly released them after they gave their promise never to attack Muslims again.

CHAPTER 97 THE TREATY OF HUDAYBIYAH

Shortly after the failed attempt, a delegation from Mecca arrived at Hudaybiyah. They were treated with courtesy and found their host to be amenable and soon negotiations were underway. The verbal negotiations resulted in a ten-year peace treaty between them. However, as a token of good will it was agreed that the Muslims would forego their pilgrimage that year, but, it was agreed that thereafter they would be permitted to offer their pilgrimage each year at the Ka'ba for three days during which time the Koraysh would leave the City.

THE OBJECTION OF SUHAYL

A problem arose when it came to writing down the terms and conditions of the treaty. The Korayshi, Suhayl, Amr's son, objected when the Prophet (sa) started to dictate to Ali the phrase, "In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful" and said, "Write, 'In Your Name Allah.' I do not know Him, the Merciful, the Most Merciful." The Prophet (sa), providing there was no harm in it, always took the middle course and accepted and so Ali wrote, "In Your Name Allah". Suhayl objected still further when the Prophet (sa) continued his dictation with the words, "This treaty is between Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (sa), and Suhayl, Amr's son," saying, "It is not my belief that you are the Messenger of Allah, if it were my opinion then I would not oppose you!"

THE PEACEFUL, WISE APPROACH OF THE PROPHET (sa)

Ali had already written the words "the Messenger of Allah" and could not bring himself to strike the words out of the treaty, whereupon the Prophet (sa) who could neither read nor write, took the document and erased the words from the treaty. It was a time for wisdom and diplomacy, and so the Prophet (sa) agreed that the treaty should be recorded instead as, "Muhammad, Abdullah's son." When Omar heard this he cried out with indignation, "Aren't you the Messenger of Allah, and aren't we Muslims! Should we accept this, when we are in the right and they are in the wrong, people will scoff at our religion!" The Prophet (sa) made no comment for he was wise and the signing of the treaty was concluded without further incident. Omar was still very upset and went to Abu Bakr to tell of his feelings. He repeated

what he had said to the Prophet (sa), whereupon Abu Bakr responded in almost exactly the same way of the Prophet (sa) and Omar became quiet and accepted it fearing that he had spoken out of turn.

THE CONDITIONS OF THE TREATY

Added to the ten year peace treaty was that both parties agreed that they would neither undermine each other nor yet indulge in treachery of any kind. The treaty also contained the condition that Muslims forcefully detained in Mecca and those Meccans inclining toward Islam would thereafter be permitted to join the Prophet (sa) in Medina, providing permission was granted by their guardians. It was also agreed that in the event that any should leave without permission they would be returned. The agreement was reciprocal and anyone in Medina who wished to join the Koraysh was free to do so under the same terms. The signatories to the treaty were the Prophet (sa), Ali, Abu Bakr, Omar, Abdur Rahman, son of Awf, Mahmood, son of Maslamah, and Abdullah, the elder son of Suhayl.

ABU JANDAL

For some time Suhayl's son, Abu Jandal, had longed to join the Prophet (sa) just as his brother had done, and had accompanied his father with the intention of joining the Prophet (sa) at Hudaybiyah. Now that this clause had become part of the treaty, Abu Jandal knew that his father would never permit him to join the Prophet (sa) and if he tried to join him, he would be returned to Mecca. Abu Jandal was deeply upset and broke down, and wept, whereupon the Prophet (sa) consoled him saying, "Be patient Abu Jandal, Allah will help you and find a way for you and others like you."

THE COMMITMENT OF THE TRIBES OF KHUZAH AND BAKR

Among those present during the drawing-up of the treaty were notable tribesmen from the tribe of Khuzah allied to the Prophet (sa) and notables from the tribe of Bakr allied to the Koraysh. The notables from the Khuzah announced that they too wished to be included in the treaty saying, "We are with Muhammad in his bond and treaty." The representatives from the tribe of Bakr also made it clear that it was their wish also to be included but that they stood with the Koraysh in both their bond and treaty. The matter was then taken to their chieftains who were agreeable and so they became party to the terms and conditions of the true.

THE PILGRIMS DISAPPOINTMENT

Tremendous disappoint and a feeling of numbness spread among the pilgrims as they learned that they were not going to be able to offer their pilgrimage that year, however, they were heartened to learn that they would be able to do so in subsequent years.

THE SACRIFICE AND THE SHAVEN HEADS

When the Prophet (sa) ordered the shaving of their heads and the sacrifice of the camels at Hudaybiyah, and not in the traditionally ordained places, the pilgrims were somewhat bewildered and the Prophet (sa) had to repeat the order twice, but the pilgrims remained as if frozen, uncomprehending.

EAGERNESS TO FOLLOW WHAT THE PROPHET (sa) DID AND SAID

The Prophet (sa) returned to his tent and told Lady Umm Salamah what had transpired and during the conversation it was thought best that he should go out but not speak to anyone until he had sacrificed his camel. The Prophet (sa) left his tent and went to the camel he had dedicated for sacrifice and in a clear voice proclaimed, "Bismillah, Allahu Akbar," and slaughtered the camel. Immediately the numbed condition of the pilgrims vanished as they raced with one another to offer their sacrifices, eager to obey their beloved Prophet (sa). Then, the Prophet (sa) called to Khirash and told him to shave his head whereupon most of the pilgrims followed his example. Such had been their enthusiasm to shave that Lady Umm Salamah remarked some time later that she feared they might seriously injure themselves. There were however, a few others who did not shave their heads entirely, preferring just to cut it short as it was known that this too is acceptable. Whilst the shaving was in progress the Prophet (sa) returned to his tent with Khirash and came out shortly afterwards and supplicated, "May Allah have mercy on those that shaved their heads." The barbers exclaimed, "And upon the shavers of the hair, O Messenger of Allah (sa)?" But the Prophet (sa) repeated his supplication again, which was met by an even greater outcry and he repeated his supplication yet a third time, but this time he added, "And the shavers of hair!" When the Prophet (sa) was asked why he had supplicated only for those that had shaved their heads he replied, "Because they did not doubt." Suddenly, there was a strong gust of wind, and the hair that lay strewn across the camp was lifted up into the air and blown towards Mecca.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE RETURN TO MEDINA

It was now time to dismantle the tents in readiness for the return journey to Medina. Much had been achieved but still the deep disappointment of not having been able to offer their pilgrimage at Ka'ba weighed heavily upon the hearts of the pilgrims.

OMAR'S REMORSE

Omar deeply regretted his uncontrolled outburst during the writing of the treaty, for he knew that the Prophet (sa) obeyed Allah, and that he should neither have questioned the authority nor yet the wisdom of Prophet Muhammad (sa). He also felt his outburst was reprehensible and so he rode quickly until he caught up with the Prophet (sa). The Prophet (sa) however, was preoccupied with other affairs and did not pay much attention to Omar and he felt even

worse whereupon he rode ahead muttering to himself, "Let my mother mourn for her son Omar!" As Omar rode on alone his fears overwhelmed him and he was deeply troubled that his actions might be the subject of a Revelation. Immersed in sincere regret, Omar did not hear the pounding of horses hooves until its rider caught up with him. The rider bore a message from the Prophet (sa) asking him to return to him. Obediently, Omar turned his mount around and rode toward the Prophet (sa). As he approached, Omar's fears were waylaid as he saw the Prophet's face aglow with happiness. As Omar drew alongside the Prophet (sa), the Prophet (sa) told him that he had receive a Revelation which was dearer to him than anything else under the sun. It was the chapter Alfat-h; The Opening, which begins with the verses:

"Indeed, We have opened for you (Prophet Muhammad) a clear opening, that Allah forgives your past and future sins, and completes His Favor to you, and guides you on a Straight Path, and that Allah helps you with a mighty help ..." Koran 48:1-3

The chapter also spoke of the allegiance given to the Prophet (sa) under the tree saying:

"Allah was pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you under the tree and He knew what was in their hearts. Therefore, He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with a victory close by." Koran 48:18

The vision that prompted the Prophet (sa) to make the pilgrimage to Mecca is also spoken of with reassurance:

"Indeed, Allah in truth, has realized His Messenger's vision. You shall enter the Sacred Mosque in security if Allah wills, with hair shaven or cut short and without fear. He knew what you did not know and granted you a near victory." Koran 48:27

Much to the elation of the pilgrims their beloved Prophet (sa) told them that Allah had accepted their pilgrimage on account of their intention.

CHAPTER 98 THE ESCAPEES FROM MECCA

When the pilgrims returned home to Medina the news of the peace treaty was welcomed with great rejoicing by those unable to accompany the Prophet (sa). The prospects of being able to offer their pilgrimage the next year without the fear of hostile action was indeed a blessing. Shortly after their return, Abu Basir, a young tribesman from the Thakif arrived in Medina. Abu Basir had converted to Islam and when the Meccans discovered his conversion they had, as was the case with many converts, imprisoned him, however, Abu Basir managed to escape. Upon reaching Medina, Abu Basir went to the Prophet (sa) and told him of his circumstances, but the Prophet (sa) was bound by the terms of the treaty and told him that he must return, but comforted him saying that Allah would soon open a way for him. Abu Basir's escape had

not gone unnoticed in Mecca and soon a tribesman was sent by the Koraysh together with his freed slave, Kawthar, to ask for his immediate return. The Prophet (sa) honored and abided by the terms of the treaty, and so Abu Basir was returned to them. Abu Basir loathed the thought of returning and planned to rid himself of the two tribesmen whilst they journeyed back to Mecca. At the first halt, Abu Basir seized the Korayshi's sword and killed him, whilst Kawthar fled in terror back to Medina where he made straight for the Mosque. As Kawthar entered he saw the Prophet (sa), raced over to him and threw himself down at his feet, whereupon the Prophet (sa) said with concerned, "This man has witnessed a terrible thing." After Kawthar had a chance to gather his breath he told the Prophet (sa) what had transpired and shortly afterwards, Abu Basir arrived with his sword still drawn. Abu Basir wanted the camels and the dead man's weapons to be divided according to the distribution of the spoils of war, however, the Prophet (sa) declined saying, "If I did such a thing it would be thought that I had not kept the terms of the treaty I had sworn to keep." Then he turned to Kawthar and said, "The spoils taken by this man are your concern, return them and the man, to the one who sent you." Kawthar was shaken by the Prophet's instruction and in fear for his life referred to the fact that he was just one person, and very unwilling to take him back to Mecca. The Prophet (sa) had abided by the treaty, but now that Kawthar, the Koraysh representative, refused to return with Abu Basir he had done all that was necessary on his part and Abu Basir left Medina for the coast.

THE ESCAPE OF UMM KULTHUM

The Prophet (sa) received a new Revelation that forbade the return of believing women to unbelievers, so when Umm Kulthum, half sister to Othman, escaped to Medina she came under their protection. Shortly after her arrival, Umm Kulthum's full blood brothers arrived to take her back to Mecca, but the Prophet (sa) refused and her brothers accepted as they agreed that women had not be mentioned in the treaty. Umm Kulthum had indeed shown great courage and soon found that she had several suitors, namely Zayd, Abdur Rahman, son of Awf and Zubair. The Prophet (sa) suggested that she marry Zayd, she consented and they were married shortly afterwards.

THE MUSLIMS OF MECCA LEARN OF ABU BASIR

Omar made it his duty to find out where Abu Basir had settled and whenever coastal tribesmen came to Medina he would inquire if they had seen him and then managed to get word of Abu Basir's circumstances to the detained Muslims in Mecca. When Abu Jandal learned of Abu Basir's exploits, he, together with several other youths, amongst whom was Waleed, brother of Khalid who had played a major role in the hostilities against the Muslims, decided to escape and join him. As time passed, seventy converts managed to make good their escape and joined Abu Basir who had by now established himself within striking distance of the northern trade route to Syria frequented by the Koraysh. Now they were strong they took to harassing and often plundered the Koraysh caravans in retaliation for their confiscated property, and the harm they had suffered simply because they worshipped Allah alone.

CHAPTER 99 THE WAIVING OF THE CLAUSE

The raids of Abu Basir and his companions were something the Koraysh could do without, it disrupted their trade and made their journeys difficult with the result the Koraysh decided to waive the clause preventing those that wished to join the Prophet (sa) from joining him. Now that the clause had been waived, the Prophet (sa) sent word to Abu Basir and the others that they were free to join him in Medina. However, Abu Basir had been taken seriously ill but lived just long enough to read the Prophet's letter and passed away with it in his hand in the knowledge that his companions would soon be with their beloved Prophet (sa) in Medina. Before his companions set off for Medina they laid Abu Basir to rest and built a simple mosque over his tomb.

THE DEATH OF WALEED

The long awaited day was near at hand. As Abu Basir’s companions reached the lava plains that lay on the outskirts of Medina, Waleed's camel tripped causing him to fall and gash his finger on a rock. The finger became infected and he grew weaker each day as the septicemia spread through his body.

WALEED’S LETTER TO KHALID

Before the angels of death finally took away his soul he had a chance to write a letter to his brother Khalid in which he encouraged him to convert to Islam. In the letter he told him that the Prophet (sa) occasionally inquired about his welfare and had commented, "If Khalid were to redirect his strength on the side of Islam against the idolaters it would be better for him, and we would prefer him to others." Waleed concluded his last letter to his brother with the words, "You see my brother what you are missing!"

CHAPTER 100 THE BLOWERS UPON KNOTS

The victory of the encounter at the Trench and the more recent treaty between Prophet Muhammad (sa) and the Koraysh left a very bitter taste in the mouths of the Jews remaining in Medina and elsewhere. The likelihood of defeating the Prophet (sa) was now very remote and resentment ran deep.

JEWISH SORCERY

Amongst the Jews remaining in Medina was an old man named Labid and his daughters. Before the time of Moses, the Jews had become skilled magicians and passed their practices down from one generation to the next, and so it was that Labid became among those highly

skilled in the art and over the years taught those practices to his daughters. One day, a Jew from Khybar approached Labid with the offer of an extremely handsome reward if he would formulate a spell of deadly proportions against the Prophet (sa). Labid accepted and contrived a way to acquire several strands of the Prophet's hair vital to the success of his sorcery. In the days that followed Labid managed to acquire enough strands of the Prophet's hair and set about his evil work. He placed the strands before him and tied eleven knots and upon each tying his daughters would breathe upon them and utter devilish incantations. Now that the knots had been tied and the incantations made, Labid attached a twig with the pollen of a male date palm to the hair and cast it into a deep water well known only to himself. The only way to annul the wickedness was to untie each of the knots that would first have to be recovered from the depths of the unknown well.

PROTECTION FROM EVIL

As the sorcery started to work, the Prophet (sa) started to feel an indefinable weakness in his body but was unable to discern what ailed him. When he was offered food he had no desire for it and his condition deteriorated rapidly, so he supplicated to Allah for a cure. As he slept he became aware of the presence of two angels, one sat at his head and the other at his feet and they informed him of the reason for his illness and mentioned the name of the well. Not long after Gabriel came to him and verified the matter and gave to him two short chapters to recite that contained eleven verses:

"Say: 'I take refuge with the Lord of Daybreak from the evil of what He has created, from the evil of the darkness when it gathers from the evil of the blowers on knots; from the evil of the envier when he envies.'" Koran Chapter 113

"Say: 'I take refuge with the Lord of people the King of people the God of people, from the evil of the slinking whisperer who whispers in the chests of people both jinn and people.'" Koran Chapter 114

After the Prophet's recitation of each verse one of the knots became untied and the Prophet (sa) regained his strength.

THE PROPHET’S BEHAVIOR TO LABID

As for Labid, the Prophet (sa) showed no anger and called for him but took no further action when he confessed he had taken a bribe in exchange for his sorcery. Soon after, the Prophet (sa) gave instructions for the well to be filled in and a new one dug in its proximity.

CHAPTER 101 A TIME FOR SADNESS, A TIME FOR REJOICING

Not long after Hudaybiyah, Lady Ayesha's mother, Umm Ruman, wife of Abu Bakr, was taken ill and destined never to recover. When it came time for her burial, she was laid to rest in the Baki, the cemetery, in which members of the Prophet's family had been buried, alongside many companions. The Prophet (sa) prayed for Umm Ruman after which he climbed down into her grave before her burial. Umm Ruman had another son named Abdul Ka'ba who had sided with the Koraysh during the encounter at Uhud. Despite his parent's and sister's acceptance of Islam he resisted, but as time passed his heart softened. It took a while for the news of his mother's death to reach him as his home was in Mecca but when it did he was deeply touched by the Prophet's gesture and his thoughts turned deeper towards Islam. A little while after Abdul Ka'ba journeyed to Medina where he was welcomed by the Prophet (sa) and there he converted to Islam, changing his name to Abdur Rahman.

CHAPTER 102 THE MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE PROPHET AND LADY UMM HABIBAH

Four months had passed since the death of Ubayd Allah, and his widow Umm Habibah, remained in Abyssinia. One day, the Prophet (sa) sent a messenger with a letter to the Negus asking him to stand proxy for him in the marriage between himself and Lady Umm Habibah. The night before the letter reached the Negus, Lady Umm Habibah had a vision in which she had been addressed as "Mother of the Believers", a title given only to the wives of the Prophet (sa) and was therefore not surprised when a messenger came from the Negus the following day with news of the Prophet's proposal. Lady Umm Habibah sent word to the Negus that she accepted and gave her relative, Khalid, the son of Sa'id, the power of attorney to act upon her behalf. The Negus was a generous man and prepared a lavish marriage feast for Lady Umm Habibah and married her by proxy to the Prophet (sa). The letter to the Negus bore not only the request for Lady Umm Habibah's hand in marriage but also an invitation to the remaining migrant Muslims to return to Arabia where they would be able to live with their fellow Muslims in the safety of Medina. It was a day they had all been waiting for and soon their belongings were packed and loaded ready for their long return journey. As a parting gift, the Negus gave the Muslims two ships to ease their crossing. In the meantime, building was underway in Medina for Lady Umm Habibah's new home which adjoined the others built onto the Mosque.

CHAPTER 103 THE JEWS OF KHYBAR

The Jews of Khybar had for many years been hostile toward the Prophet (sa) and his followers. Only months before it had been their tribesmen that had joined Huyay from the tribe of Nadir and incited the Koraysh to rise up against the Prophet (sa). Then again, in an attempt to ensure the Koraysh victory at the encounter of the Trench they had bribed the Ghatafan with one third of their date harvest in return for their support, and more recently procured the services of Labid in an attempt to murder the Prophet (sa). When news reached them of the signing of the ten-year peace treaty between the Prophet (sa) and the Koraysh,

the Jews were devastated for they knew the Koraysh would no longer pursue or assist them in their goal to bring about his downfall. The Jews of Khybar were known to be particularly wealthy and their circumstances had been enhanced still further upon the arrival of their exiled relatives from the tribe of Nadir, in fact, the community at Khybar might well have been considered the most wealthy of tribes of Arabia. This in itself presented a source of danger to the existence of the Muslims as the Jews had already shown their ability and willingness to use their wealth against them. To ensure the future safety of the Muslims it was evident that something had to be done about Khybar, attempts to live peacefully with the Jews through alliances had been drawn up, agreed upon, then broken by the Jews and tossed to the wind; there was only one course left open to the Muslims and that was to quell their resistance.

THOSE THAT REMAINED BEHIND

The chapter sent down during the return journey from Hudaybiyah had spoken of the spoils that would soon come to hand. It also mentioned the condition of the those that remained in Medina instead of joining the Prophet (sa) and their fellow Muslims on their pilgrimage to Mecca on account of the fact that there had been no prospects of gaining any spoils. The Revelation also spoke of how these people would soon come to the Prophet (sa) and plead with him to allow them to take part in the next engagement when they realized that there would be considerable wealth to share. But, in the same Revelation, the Prophet (sa) received another instruction which was that they should not be permitted to take part in the next encounter, so, when they came to him permission to accompany the Muslims was denied. However, he told them that they would be permitted to take part thereafter

"When you set forth to take the spoils, those Bedouins who lagged behind will say: 'Let us follow you.' They hope to change the Words of Allah. Say: 'You shall not follow us. Allah has said so before.' They will reply: 'No, you are envious of us.' Rather, they have only understood a little! Say to the Arabs who lagged behind: 'You shall be called upon to fight a might nation, unless they embrace Islam. If you are obedient you shall receive a good wage from Allah. But, if you turn away, as you turned your backs before, He will punish you with a painful punishment.' Koran 48:15-16

CHAPTER 104 THE MARCH TO KHYBAR

It was the policy of the Prophet (sa) never to divulge his plans until the last moment so that they might retain an element of surprise. However, this time news reached the Koraysh who paid close attention to the scene now about to unfold in the hope that the tribes of Khybar would succeed where they had failed. The fortifications erected before the advent of Islam around Khybar were exceptionally strong so when the Jews learned of the pending attack they were not particularly perturbed and discounted the possibility of being routed. However, they did contact their brethren at Wadi l-Kura who had also built fortresses and agreed to support one another should the need arise. The confidence of the Khybar chieftains was such that they

did not concern themselves with bothering their Arab allies of the Ghatafan for support until the very last minute, when one of their chieftains, named Kinanah, learned that the Prophet (sa) and his army had set out from Medina. Once again the Jews offered the Ghatafan a handsome bribe and four thousand from the Ghatafan prepared themselves in readiness to lend their support to the already ten thousand strong Jewish army against the relatively small army of just one thousand, six hundred Muslims.

THE CLOAK OF ABU ABS

Poverty was commonplace among the Muslims, and those that had accompanied the Prophet (sa) on the pilgrimage had spent much on their sacrificial camels and robes. Shortly before the Muslims were due to embark on their march, Abu Abs from the tribe of Aws went to the Prophet (sa) and told him of his plight. He had been able to secure a camel but his clothes were in tatters and he had no money to leave with his family for food nor yet to buy provisions for the journey. It was the custom of the Prophet (sa) never to keep the gifts he had been given, rather, he would distribute whatever came his way to the needy and it so happened that he had been given a fine cloak so he gave it to Abu Abs. Abu Abs was delighted, but instead of keeping it he sold it and with its proceeds bought a cloak of lesser quality, some food for his family and journey. As the Muslims rode to Khybar, the Prophet (sa) chanced to see Abu Abs wearing his new cloak so he inquired what he had done with the cloak he had given him. When he learned of Abu Abs' action he was well pleased and told him that if he lived long enough he would indeed have more than enough to suffice his needs, indeed, he told him, that he would have so much that it would not be good for him!

THE SONG OF IBN AL AKWA

As the journey progressed, the Prophet (sa) called upon ibn Al Akwa, a man from the tribe of Aslam, known for his melodious, sweet, voice and asked him to sing. Amongst the many songs he sang were the words the Prophet (sa) had taught the companions as they dug the trench around Medina:

"Allah, except for You we would never have been guided, nor yet given charity, nor prayed Your prayer."

The camels also enjoyed hearing his sweet voice and responded by running quickly. When ibn Al Akwa finished singing, the Prophet (sa) supplicated saying, "May Allah have mercy upon you." Whereupon Omar commented, "You have made it a certainty, O Messenger of Allah (sa), how I wish we could have enjoyed his voice longer." Among those accompanying the army were several ladies whose intention was to nurse the wounded. They were Lady Umm Salamah, Safiyah, sister of the martyred Hamza, Umm Ayman, the childhood nurse of the Prophet (sa), Nusaybah and Umm Sulaym both of whom had tended to the wounded during the hostilities at Uhud.

THE DATE GROVES OF KHYBAR

Two and a half days had now passed, and as evening approached the Prophet (sa) called upon a guide to take him nearer to the fortifications, for it was his plan to position his army between the inhabitants of the fortresses and the Ghatafan whose arrival was anticipated. The night was dark and all was still behind the ramparts; no one detected their presence so they were able to reach the clearing that lay in front of the ramparts, then return undetected to the camp. As dawn approached, the Prophet (sa) and his followers offered their prayers and as the sun spread its rays, they saw the fields and date groves beyond which lay the fortresses. Soon after, the farmers came out from the fortresses to tend to their groves and fields, and were panic stricken as they caught sight of the Prophet's army. The farmers dropped their tools and fled back to the fortresses to raise the alarm whereupon the Prophet (sa) exalted Allah, saying, "Allah is the Greatest, Khybar is crushed!" Then he recited:

"When it descends upon their courtyards, evil will be the morning of those forewarned." Koran 37:177

CHAPTER 105 THE EVENTS OF KHYBAR

As the alarm was rang out, the Jewish chieftains met hastily to discuss their course of action. All except one felt their fortresses were strong enough to ward-off the Muslims. However, the Prophet (sa) knew well from a previous revelation, that despite their numbers, their hearts would be divided. The Revelation was fulfilled yet again as each party chose to defend themselves in individual groups.

“Their fear of you in their hearts is greater than their fear of Allah; that is because they are a people who do not understand. They will never fight against you all together except from fortified villages or from behind walls. Their courage is great among themselves; you think them to be united, yet their hearts are not united. That is because they are a people Who have no sense.” Koran 59:13-14

Outside the fortifications, the small Muslim army stood as one in readiness with heart, mind, body and soul, trusting, loving and fearing Allah rather than being terrified by what would have appeared to the unbeliever as a daunting army of first rate archers protected by very strong fortifications. The order was given and the first assault was launched upon the fortress nearest to them. The Jews remained behind the fortress walls, some busied themselves strengthening its weaker parts whilst the remainder engaged themselves showering bevies of arrows down upon the Muslims from the ramparts. Never before had the Muslims faced such ferocity, and the ladies accompanying them were kept busy tending the wounded.

THE SPY

The hostilities raged for five days and nothing as yet had been gained. One night during Omar's command, a spy infiltrated the Muslim camp and was caught, then brought before Omar. The man feared for his life and offered to give Omar information if he would spare him. Omar accepted and the Jew told him that there was another fortress less well guarded than the one they were attacking and that its strongholds housed an arsenal of weapons, amongst which were those used to breach the walls of fortresses. The next day, Omar launched an attack on the less well-guarded fortress and Allah blessed the Muslims with success, and the fortress fell. As they searched its strongholds, and cellars they found the information they had been given to be accurate as their eyes fell upon not only an arsenal of hand weapons but a large catapult strong enough to hurl heavy rocks at the fortress walls and two long, strong shields under which several men could walk and thereby get close to the fortress walls without being harmed.

THE GHATAFAN

The four thousand strong tribe of Ghatafan had set out upon their march to Khybar intending to support their allies. At nightfall, after their first day's march, they struck camp and settled themselves down to sleep, however, they had little rest because during the night a strange, urgent voice was heard calling to them saying, "Your people, your people, your people!" They were very startled and looked around them but were unable to detect whether the voice came from the heavens or the earth. All manner of thoughts raced through their minds, but their paramount thought was that their families were in some sort of danger, so they returned home. When they reached their homes their families were very surprised to see them, all was well and no harm had come to them. However, the Ghatafan were reluctant to set out again as they feared that perhaps harm was on its way, and then again, it was in their opinion, mostly likely that if they did set out they would arrive too late.

v THE FORTRESS OF NAIM

With the capture of the arsenal came the turning point of the encounter, and one by one the fortresses started to fall. However, there remained five strong fortresses, some of which were better equipped and greater in man power than their counterparts. Naim was the first of the five to be targeted, unlike the other fortresses, its soldiers came outside its walls to fight and the Muslims faced strong resistance that forced them to temporarily withdraw. That evening, the Prophet (sa) announced, "Tomorrow, I will give the banner to someone whom Allah, and His Messenger love. In his hands Allah will give us victory -- he is not a person to turn away and flee." The next day, the Prophet (sa) asked for Ali, but was informed that his eyes were troubling him. However, the Prophet (sa) asked for him to come and upon seeing the soreness of his eyes, he rubbed some of his saliva over them and supplicated for his recovery. Ali's eyes recovered immediately and the Prophet (sa) handed him a large black banner made from a cloak that once belonged to Lady Ayesha. Then, Ali asked, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), shall I fight them until they become as us?" Once again the just nature of the Prophet (sa) was

apparent in his reply, "Continue until you reach them, then invite them to Islam and explain their obligations to Allah. If just one person is guide by Allah through you that will be better for you than a herd of red camels." As the small, but valiant army attacked, Zubair and Abu Dujanah, recognizable by his red turban, fought with the same extraordinary zeal as they displayed at Uhud. Ali led the final attack that caused the enemy to retreat. Some of the Jews took refuge in the fort, but many escaped through a back entrance to neighboring fortresses. However, most made their way to a fortress called "Zubair", which was by far the most formidable of the remaining four and had been built on a high cliff that provided a natural defense. In the meantime, the Muslims took control of the main entrance of the fortress of Naim.

THE FORTRESS OF ZUBAIR

Only the fortresses of Zubair, Kamus and two others remained. For three days the Muslims concentrated their efforts on the fortress of Zubair, but its natural defense together with its additional soldiers made things very difficult. Then, a Jew fearing for his life, family and property, made his way in secret to the Prophet (sa) and told him that he would disclose vital information in return for the safety of his family and possessions -- the Prophet (sa) agreed. The Jew informed him that the fortress had an underground supply of fresh water capable of sustaining them for as long as they wanted to hold out. However, there was a place outside the fortress where the Prophet (sa) could dig and divert the stream so that no water flowed into the fortress. The informant further told the Prophet (sa) that on account of the constant supply of fresh water, the army had not concerned themselves with its storage. Work to divert the water was soon under way and when the Jews realized that their stream had been diverted they came down from their fortress and another very fierce encounter ensued in which they suffered defeat.

THE MARTYDOM OF THE SON OF AL AKWA

During the turmoil of the encounter, the sword of ibn Al Akwa, who had sung for the Prophet (sa) on their journey, slipped and he wounded himself so critically that he died. It had been an exhausting day and as the Muslims took their well-earned rest some spoke of their martyred companions and the son of Al Akwa was mentioned. Some of the Ansars, had not heard of the Prophet's supplication for him and were in doubt as to whether he could be considered to be a martyr. When the matter was drawn to the Prophet's attention he informed them saying, "Indeed, he passes through the Gardens of Paradise as freely as a swimmer passes through water," and they were very happy for him.

THE FORTRESS OF KAMUS

The fortress of Kamus belonged to the richest of all the families of Khybar, the family of Kinanah. Kinanah belonged to the tribe of Nadir. Like others in his tribe, Kinanah had been

amongst those exiled from Medina for their treachery and as they left had taunted the impoverished Muslims by wearing and flaunting their excessive wealth and fineries as they rode out of the City. Kinanah could not fathom out why the Ghatafan had not as yet come to their aid, however, he had not given up hope. Each day he would look for distant clouds of dust to herald their arrival but there were none. Two weeks later when it was apparent that the Ghatafan were not coming he finally sent word to the Prophet (sa) that he wished to surrender.

TERMS OF SURENDER

The Prophet (sa) accepted, so Kinanah and several members of his family left the fortress to surrender. The terms agreed to were such that their lives would be spared and no prisoners taken in exchange for their wealth, property and the evacuation of Khybar. It was not the Prophet’s intention to expose the Jews to further hardship, rather it was to confiscate their wealth in order to suppress their multiple attempts to prevent and destroy the message the Prophet (sa) brought. The Prophet (sa) warned that these terms of safe passage would not apply to any one who tried to smuggle or hide any of their wealth or possessions. The terms were very clear and accepted, so the Prophet (sa) called upon Abu Bakr, Ali, Zubair and Omar and ten Jews to witness the agreement.

THE CONCEALED WEALTH OF KINANAH

The Muslims remembered well the excessive display of opulence the tribe of Nadir had made when they left Medina, and were quick to realize, as did their fellow Jews, that the wealth they now declared as being their total wealth was but a mere fraction. The Prophet (sa) questioned the Jews about it and in response they offered excuses saying they had sold their finery to pay for weapons, and fortifications. As before, some of the Jews realized that Prophet (sa) Muhammad was no ordinary man, but refused to accept him as a Prophet as he was not of their race, however, they were aware that he was a man that could not be deceived. This conviction was demonstrated when one of Kinanah's friends went to Kinanah and begged him not to hide his wealth as he was confident that everything he had hidden would be found and then he would be put to death. Kinanah was extremely angered by his friend's advice for he had many hiding places he thought to be completely undetectable. Shortly afterward, Kinanah's hiding places were discovered.

THE FINAL SURRENDER

The two remaining fortresses surrendered without further hostilities and accepted the same terms and conditions. Many of the Jews were farmers and knew how best to reap the blessings of the land, with this in mind they sent a deputation to the Prophet (sa) saying that if he would permit them to continue as before and live in their homes, they would in return tend the land and pay rent of half its harvest each year. Prophet Muhammad (sa) accepted,

however, he reserved the right to expel them at any time if they did not live peacefully.

THE OASIS OF FADAK

News of Khybar's defeat soon reached the Jewish owned oasis of Fadak and with it rumors that the Prophet (sa) intended to engage them. Not wishing to suffer the fate of their brethren, they sent word to the Prophet (sa) that they wished to surrender upon the same terms and conditions offered at Khybar. The Prophet (sa) accepted because his way was always that of peace.

THE POISONED LAMB

The Word of Allah had been fulfilled, and the band of believers took a well-earned rest before their victorious march back to Medina. A Jew by the name of Salaam, Mishkam's son, had been killed during the hostilities and his wife sought to take revenge. Prophet Muhammad (sa) never refused the invitation of anyone, no matter who they were, so when Salaam's wife invited him and his companions to a meal the invitation was graciously accepted. In preparation for the meal Salaam's wife had a lamb slaughtered, then, as she prepared it, poisoned it, paying particular attention to its shoulders as she had heard that the Prophet (sa) like that part of meat. When the lamb was ready she set it down in front of the Prophet (sa) who took a bite of the meat. Before he had chance to swallow it, the shoulder spoke and informed him that the meat had been poisoned whereupon he spat it out and told his companions not to eat it. Bishr, Bara's son, who was sitting next to the Prophet (sa) had already swallowed a piece of the meat and died from the poisoning. The Prophet (sa) sent for Salaam's wife and asked why she had poisoned the lamb, whereupon she asked who had informed him that it had been poisoned; the Prophet (sa) replied: "The shoulder." In reply to his question she told him that he must know the reason why she had poisoned the lamb. However, she continued saying that it was on account of her dead husband, father and uncle. She then told the Prophet (sa) that she thought if he was a king she would be better off without him, but on the other hand, if he was a prophet then the poison would inform him. The Prophet (sa) had mercy upon the woman and took no action against her. However, from that year up until the time he passed away, at the same time each year, the Prophet (sa) would suffer on account of a tiny bit of poison he swallowed.

THE DONKEY THAT SPOKE

When it came time to distribute the spoils of war, the Prophet (sa) received, amongst other things, a black donkey whereupon he asked the donkey its name. The donkey answered, "Yazid, son of Shihab. Allah created me from a line of sixty donkeys, and none but prophets have ridden us. Of them only I remain, and of prophets only you; I was waiting for you to ride me. I used to belong to a Jew who gave me very little to eat or drink; he made me carry heavy loads and beat me." The Prophet (sa) had mercy upon the poor animal and released it

but it followed him back to Medina. When the Prophet (sa) passed away, the donkey was so distraught that it threw itself in to Abu Al Hashim's well and died.

CHAPTER 106 LADY SAFIYAH, DAUGHTER OF HUYAY

Safiyah was the daughter of Huyay from the Jewish tribe of Nadir. She was quite unlike her father and since early childhood had grown in piety and become an upright young lady in search of the truth. During her childhood she had heard stories about the expected coming of a new prophet and learned that the reason why her ancestors had settled in Yathrib, as Medina was then called, was because the prophecies foretold he would appear in that vicinity and each tribe hoped the honor would belong to their own tribe. Safiyah remembered well the days, when she, as a young girl, had heard from traders returning from Mecca of a man claiming to be a prophet and that he denounced idol worship and preached the Oneness of Allah. She also remembered how it had caused such an upheaval in her community as the Prophet (sa) was an Arab, a descendant of Ishmael rather than a Jew descended from Isaac. She also remembered how, at the age of ten, she had seen both her father and uncle journey from Medina to prove to themselves that the rumors where unfounded. Both of them knew the characteristics of the expected prophet as well as the signs to look for as they had been recorded in their scriptures and that his expected arrival was a constant topic for discussion amongst the Jews. Upon their return Safiyah had been unable to comprehend their reaction and even more so their state of depression. In the purity of her heart, she had expected them either to return with the news that he either fulfilled or did not fulfill the conditions in the scriptures, but they were silent and their silence puzzled her. Shortly before the Prophet (sa) had set out for Khybar. Huyay had married the now seventeen-year old Safiyah to Kinanah. To the onlooker it may have appeared that the marriage was all a young girl could ever hope for on account of Kinanah's wealth and standing. However, she was a reluctant bride and far from happy. One night Safiyah had a vision in which she saw the moon suspended over a city, which she knew to be Medina. In her vision she saw the moon drift towards Khybar and when it reached the city it had come to rest in her lap. Innocently, Safiyah told Kinanah of her vision whereupon, in an uncontrollable burst of anger, Kinanah struck her violently upon her face saying, "This can mean but one thing, you desire Muhammad the King of Hijaz!" When Safiyah was brought before the Prophet (sa) he noticed her badly bruised face and asked her about it whereupon Safiyah told him of her vision and how after she had related it to her husband he had struck her. When the spoils of war were being divided, Safiyah had been given to a man from the tribe of Kalb by the name if Dihyah. When the Prophet (sa) learned of her vision he asked him to release her to him and take her cousin instead. Dihyah agreed and the Prophet (sa) offered her, her freedom telling her that if she wished she may remain as a Jewess or embrace Islam. Without hesitation, Safiyah replied, "I choose Allah and His Messenger (sa)." And so when the time came for the Muslims to leave Khybar, Safiyah left with the ladies. Soon thereafter the Prophet (sa) asked Lady Safiyah to marry him and she welcomed the proposal and the two were married.

THE NEWS OF WADI L-KURA

As for the Jews of Wadi l-Kura, supporters of the Khybarites, they were not to escape. For three days before the Prophet's return to Medina they fought against him and finally surrendered under the same terms as their brethren in Khybar.

CHAPTER 107 THE VICTORIOUS ARRIVAL

It had been seven weeks since the Prophet (sa) and his followers left for Khybar and during that time his companions from Abyssinia arrived in Medina and with them his new bride, Lady Umm Habibah. It was a time for thanksgiving, rejoicing and reunion. Ladies Swaydah and Umm Salamah had been close friends of Lady Umm Habibah in Abyssinia and were happy to see her once again. Her room adjoining the Mosque had been completed and upon the Prophet's return a second marriage feast was prepared in their honor.

THE INVITATIONS

At the encounter of the Trench when the companions were digging they had been unable to move a boulder and had called upon the help of the Prophet (sa). The Prophet (sa) struck the boulder three times and upon the third strike it disintegrated into a pile of sand. However, each time the boulder had been struck it emitted a brilliant light, so bright that it lit up three far away cities. The first stretched as far as Yemen, lighting up its castles, the second reached the castles of Syria and the third had lit the Persian city of Madian whose ruler was Chosroes. On account of this miracle the Prophet (sa) knew that Islam would spread to these great cities and beyond to all the other great cities, towns and villages of the world, and so he wrote a letter to the rulers of Yemen, Syria and Persia inviting them to embrace Islam. Chosroes had heard about the Prophet (sa) and had, before the letter reached him, sent word to Badhan, his Governor in Yemen, requesting a report about the Prophet (sa) together with his circumstances and so Badhan wasted no time in dispatching two of his most reliable envoys to Medina to investigate the matter. Upon their arrival they sought an audience with the Prophet (sa) and were intrigued by the devotion and readiness of his followers to obey him which in turn prompted them to pay close attention to his teachings. When the Prophet (sa) first saw them he was surprised by their appearance, for they followed the style of Chosroes and had shaved their beards and sported large mustaches. The Prophet (sa) asked them who had told them to do this, whereupon they told him, referring to their ruler, "My lord." The Prophet (sa) answered saying, "My Lord has commanded me to grow my beard and trim my mustache short." The initial meeting was brief and the Prophet (sa) requested them to return the next day. That night, Angel Gabriel came to the Prophet (sa) informing him that Chosroes had been overthrown and killed in an uprising and that his son, Siroes, was now the ruler. When the two envoys returned the next day, the Prophet (sa) informed them of what had happened in Persia and told them to return to Badhan with a message saying, "Tell him that my religion and nation will extend far beyond that of Chosroes, and that I invite him to embrace Islam.

Whatever he has now he will retain, and I will appoint him as King of Yemen, ruler of its people." The bewildered envoys took their leave and returned to Yemen, conveyed the message then spoke to Badhan about Islam. Badhan informed his envoys that he would wait and see if the situation in Persia had changed and if it was as they narrated, then indeed he would believe that Muhammad was a Prophet (sa) sent by Allah. Badhan didn't have to wait long until a messenger arrived from Persia, saying that Siroes was their new ruler and as such required their allegiance. Without hesitation, Badhan, rather than giving his allegiance to Siroes, embraced Islam along with his two envoys and several others. Badhan then sent messengers to Medina and the Prophet (sa) told his companions that Badhan was the new ruler of Yemen.

SIROES RECEIVES THE PROPHET’S LETTER

The letter the Prophet (sa) sent to Chosroes arrived in Madian after his death and so it was given to his son, who after reading it, tore it in shreds. When the Prophet (sa) learned of Siroes response he supplicated, "O Lord, tear his kingdom from him" and the supplication of the Prophet (sa) came to be.

CHAPTER 108 THE TRIBES OF HAWAZIN AND GHATAFAN

Now that the Jews of Fadak had surrendered and their arms confiscated, the Jews of Khybar felt insecure as the tribe of Murrah -- a branch of the Ghatafan -- were hostile toward them, so they sent word to the Prophet (sa) requesting his protection.

MUSLIMS SENT TO PROTECT THE JEWS

The Prophet (sa) dispatched twenty Muslims to protect the Jews, however, the Murrah struck quickly and all but a few Muslims were martyred defending the Jews. When news of the attack reached the Prophet (sa) he sent two hundred of his men to replace them, amongst whom was Osama, Zayd's son, both of whom the Prophet (sa) loved dearly. Soon after their arrival, the Murrah attacked again but this time after heavy combat it was they who sustained a heavy loss of life.

OSAMA, THE SON OF ZAYD

Osama was a youth of seventeen years and during the hostilities a Murrah tribesman challenged and jeered at him on account of his youthfulness. Orders had been given that the Muslims should fight near each other, however, in the heat of the moment, Osama chased the man into the desert. Osama's youthfulness soon overtook the man and he smote him with his sword whereupon the man cried out, "There is no god except Allah!" However, Osama overcome by the circumstances, did not heed the man's witnessing and killed him. Osama did not return to camp until nightfall, his failure to return caused his companions considerable

anxiety whereupon Ghalib, Abdullah's son, the commander, reprimanded Osama when he eventually returned. Osama explained to Ghalib that he had pursued a man who challenged him and related what had happened. When Osama reached the point where the man had proclaimed his belief, Ghalib stopped him and asked if he had laid down his sword, but to his great dismay, Osama replied that he hadn't until after the man had breathed his last. The disturbing news spread throughout the camp and everyone rebuked him until he clasped his head in his hand in deep regret for a Revelation had been sent down sometime before that spoke of such circumstances:

"Believers, if you are journeying in the way of Allah, do not say to those who offer you peace, until it has been clarified: 'You are not believers,' seeking the enjoyment of the worldly life, with Allah there are many spoils. You were like that before, and Allah has been gracious to you. Therefore let it be clarified. Surely, Allah is Aware of what you do." Koran 4:94

Situations similar to this had arisen before, however, they were over the prospects of receiving the spoils of war when an enemy, at the point of death, had proclaimed his faith, and then been reprieved on account of the Revelation.

ALI’S WARNING

There had also been another occasion when Ali was about to slay an unbeliever and the man spat at him. As the man spat Ali became enraged but spared his life and said afterwards, "If I had killed him then it would have been through pride, and not for the Sake of Allah."

OSAMA'S RETURN TO MEDINA

Upon their return to Medina, Osama went to the Prophet (sa) who greeted him affectionately and asked him to tell him about the encounter. Osama related the events and it was only when he reached the point where he had killed the man that the Prophet (sa) interrupted him asking, "Osama, did you kill him when he said, 'There is no god except Allah?'" "O Messenger of Allah (sa)," replied Osama, "he only said it to escape the sword." The Prophet (sa) continued, "Did you open his heart to know if he lied or was telling the truth?" Osama felt sick inside and was extremely sorry for his actions and said: "I will never again kill anyone who says 'there is no god except Allah.'" When Osama returned to his friends they witnessed how greatly troubled he was about the whole affair especially when he told them, "I wish I had not entered Islam before this day," as he knew that when someone embraces Islam all their previous sins are wiped away and they start a new page.

CHAPTER 109 THE TRIAL OF WEALTH

The months that followed were comparatively peaceful. The Muslims were looked upon in a different light and their opponents were reluctant to initiate further major hostilities against

them although there were a few minor incidents. The Muslim society had never enjoyed such affluence as they currently experienced, as each of the participants in the recent encounters received their fair share of the spoils of war including the Prophet (sa) for whom Allah had decreed should also receive a share.

"And know that one fifth of whatever you take as spoils belong to Allah, the Messenger, kinsmen of the Messenger, the orphans, the needy, and the destitute traveler ..." Koran 8:41

The new found wealth had no effect on the Prophet (sa), rather, he either put it to one side in order to be sold in the cause of Islam, spent on the needs of his family or gave it to the needy whenever a situation arose.

THE DEMANDING WOMEN

In the apartment of each of the Prophet's wives hung a curtain to ensure their privacy when any of his companions came to visit. One day, two migrant women from the Koraysh went to the Prophet (sa) whilst he was in one of the apartments and asked him for some clothes that had been taken as spoils of war. They knew they would not come away empty handed for the Prophet (sa) was known never to refuse a request, however, the women forgot in whose presence they were and became over-demanding, and raised their voices. Omar happened to be passing by and heard the raised voices so he knocked upon the door and asked permission to enter. When the two women heard Omar's voice they were struck with fear and rushed to hide themselves behind the curtain, whereupon the Prophet (sa) started to laugh. As Omar entered he said, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), may Allah fill your life with laughter!" Amidst his laughter, the Prophet (sa) said, "It is indeed remarkable how quickly these women, who are still with me, hid behind the curtain when they heard your voice!" Omar humbly replied, "It is you they should be in awe of rather than me!" Then, Omar turned toward the curtain and said, "You are enemies of yourself, do you fear me rather than the Messenger of Allah (sa)?" In a timid voice the reply came: "Yes, it is so because you are rough and harsh whereas the Messenger of Allah (sa) is not." "This is so, son of Khattab," said the Prophet (sa), "by Him in whose hand is my soul, if satan knew you were traveling upon a certain road, he would choose an alternate route to be alone."

CHAPTER 110 GIFTS FROM THE MUQAWQAS, PRIMATE OF THE CHRISTIAN, COPTIC CHURCH IN EGYPT

Sometime before, the Prophet (sa) sent a letter to the Coptic Christian leader of Alexandria, Egypt inviting him to Islam. Much to the Prophet's disappointment the reply he received was noncommittal, however, it was not hostile, and the leader of the Christian church sent an assortment of generous gifts to him including honey, a mule the Prophet (sa) named Duldul, a donkey he called Yafur and a young Coptic Christian girl by the name of Maryam who was escorted by Hatib, Abi Baltaah's son. Upon her arrival, Maryam was taken to live in the house

of Lady Safiyah stayed near the Mosque prior to the completion of her apartment and there the Prophet (sa) would visit her. Maryam was, at that time, one of those to whom Allah refers in the Koran as being "those whom your right hand possess" for He never referred to such people as slaves, and as such a relationship was permissible.

Allah says: "O Prophet, We have made lawful to you the wives to whom you have given dowries and those whom your right hand possesses, of whatever spoils of war that Allah as given you ..." Koran 33.50

Such rights are referred to in several places in the Koran.

CHAPTER 111 UMRAH - THE LESSER PILGRIMAGE

Almost a year had passed since the signing of the Treaty at Hudaybiyah so two thousand pilgrims busied themselves with their preparations to offer the lesser pilgrimage at their beloved Ka'ba. Neither Khalid nor Amr wished to be in Mecca when the news arrived that the Muslims had left Medina to offer their pilgrimage as they both held the opinion that the treaty had been a moral victory for the Prophet (sa) and signaled the beginning of the end of the Koraysh resistance. However, they had kept their opinion to themselves and had, unknown to one another, left Mecca well in advance to avoid their arrival.

A TIME FOR REFLECTION

There was, however, a difference between the two. Amr remained adamant in his resistance whereas Khalid, although it was hard for him, started to examine his motives. Traditional pride, no matter whether it could be proved to be sound or baseless, had always been a matter he considered too blasphemous to question. However, he could not help but think that the encounters at Uhud and the Trench had been futile, and when the Prophet (sa) eluded him before the treaty of Hudaybiyah he was heard to exclaim, "This man is protected!" Then there was Khybar, Khalid could not help but wonder in amazement at its fall; the band of Muslims had been so small against the large, well armed Jewish army. It was time for self-examination, and soul searching.

THE KORAYSH VACATE MECCA

The Koraysh were true to their word, when news reached Mecca that the pilgrims had reached its outer limits they vacated Mecca to stay in the surrounding hills and mountains. As for the Koraysh chieftains, they situated themselves on the Mount of Abu Kubays from whence they could view the Ka'ba and monitor the movements of the Muslims.

THE PILGRIMS ENTER MECCA

The Koraysh now gazed down from the mountain as the Prophet (sa), riding his favorite camel Kaswa, led the procession of pilgrims into Mecca with Abdullah, Rawahah's son walking beside holding Kaswa's bridle. The pilgrims arrived on camels and foot dressed in white, whilst all chanted the compelling supplication Prophet Abraham had offered so many centuries before on the first pilgrimage: "Labbayk Allahumma Labbayk! - Here I am O Allah, obedient to You with pleasure and happiness!" At the entrance to the Holy precincts of Ka'ba, the Prophet (sa), still mounted on his camel, rearranged his pilgrimage attire, tucking it under his right arm so that his shoulder was bare, then he crossed the two ends over his left shoulder so that one piece hung down in front and the other at the back. All eyes were on the Prophet (sa) and his companions followed his example and adjusted their robes likewise. The Prophet (sa) rode to the south-east corner of the Ka'ba and reverently touched the Black Stone with his staff, then he circumambulated Ka'ba seven times, after which he made his way to the foot of the hill of Safwa and walked quickly between it and the hill of Marwah seven times, just as Lady Haggar had done so many centuries before when she searched for water for her infant son, Ishmael. The sacrificial animals had been led to the foot of Marwah and now that the rites between the two hills had been completed, the Prophet (sa) sacrificed a camel. The lesser pilgrimage was complete and the Prophet (sa) returned to the Sacred House with the intent to enter it. Before vacating Mecca, the Koraysh had locked the door to the Ka'ba -- which still housed numerous idols -- and a man from the tribe of Abd Ad-Dharr had taken its key with him. The Prophet (sa) sent one of his companions to ask for they key but the Koraysh chieftains refused saying that entry into the Sacred House had not been part of the agreement. It was a great disappointment to the pilgrims and none entered. The time for Zuhr prayer approached so the Prophet (sa) asked Bilal to climb up on top of the roof of Ka'ba and make the call to prayer. Bilal climbed up on top and his dulcet, penetrating voice called the pilgrims to prayer. Bilal's call did not go unnoticed by the Koraysh chieftains who were extremely agitated when they realized that the caller was Bilal, a former slave, and that he was calling from the roof of Ka'ba. The three days allotted for the pilgrimage were among the happiest days they had spent since the Migration to Medina, and Muslims, forcefully compelled to remain in Mecca, were reunited with their fellow Muslims as they slipped away at dusk to join in the prayers. The Prophet (sa) had pitched his tent near the Sacred House, and it was there that his uncle Abbas, who had not yet converted to Islam, went to visit him despite the frowns of the Koraysh. During these brief days, Abbas suggested to the Prophet (sa) that he might like to take his widowed, believing sister-in-law, Maymunah, to be his wife and the Prophet (sa) accepted the marriage proposal.

UMARAH, DAUGHTER OF HAMZA

Ali and Lady Fatima had accompanied the Prophet (sa) on the pilgrimage. When Abbas told the Prophet (sa) that Umarah the daughter of Hamza's widowed wife Salma, was living with them on account of his wife's kinship to her, Ali suggested that when they returned to Medina, Umarah should return with them in Lady Fatima's howdah. The arrangement was accepted and so when the time came the ladies traveled to Medina together. Salma shared the same mother as Umm Fadl and Lady Maymunah, as did her full blood sister, Asma. However, Umm

al Fadl and Lady Maymunah had another half sister on her father's side who was also called Asma and happened to be the widow of the Makhzumite chieftain Waleed through which union Khalid had been born, and so it was through these bonds of kinship that Khalid was related to the Prophet (sa).

THE TIME TO LEAVE

As the three days drew to a close, the Prophet (sa) was found sitting with Sa’ad, Ubadah's son and several other Ansars when Huwytib and Suhail came down from Abu Kubays and approached him saying abruptly, "Your time has reached its end, so go!" The Prophet (sa) requested a little more time saying, "Would it harm you to give me a little more time so that I may prepare a feast and celebrate my marriage amongst you?" The reply was sharp, "We do not need your feast - leave us! We ask you by Allah, and by the treaty we have with you to leave our City, the third night has now passed!" Sa’ad took offense at their abruptness, but the justice of the Prophet (sa) prevailed and he stopped him saying, "Sa’ad, do not speak harshly to those who come to visit us in our camp." Then he gave instructions that no pilgrim should remain in Mecca after dusk. However, he made one exception, which was that Abu Rafi should remain behind to bring Lady Maymunah to him as soon as she was ready to travel. By dusk, the pilgrims had left their beloved Ka'ba and when Lady Maymunah joined the Prophet (sa) at Sarif their marriage was consummated.

CHAPTER 112 THE DISPUTE

The return journey to Medina was full of happy memories and those unable to offer their pilgrimage waited anxiously for the pilgrims homecoming to hear their news.

UMARAH

Several days had passed since their return when the Prophet (sa) was awakened from his afternoon nap by the sound of heated voices. He was able to discern that the voices, which were growing increasingly persistent, were those of Zayd, Haritha's son and two of the sons of Abu Talib, Ali and Jafar. The Prophet (sa) arose, opened the door and called them to him then inquired the reason for their dispute. The companions told the Prophet (sa) it was a matter of honor over who should be the guardian of Umarah, Hamza's daughter. Ever since Umarah's arrival in Medina she had lived with Lady Fatima and Ali, Ali claimed he had a better right than the others to her guardianship as he was her paternal uncle and had been entrusted with her safekeeping on the journey from Mecca. In turn, Jafar told the Prophet (sa) that she was his uncle's daughter and that his wife, Asma, was her maternal aunt. On account of the brotherhood established by the Prophet (sa) between Zayd and Hamza, Zayd was of the opinion that he should be her guardian as he had been left in charge of Hamza's affairs after his martyrdom. It said much for the character of these noble companions who were all very willing to take Umarah under their guardianship, and the Prophet (sa) praised them

accordingly, then told them, "Jafar, you are like me in both looks and character, you have most right to her guardianship. A mother's sister is like a mother." Jafar was delighted but arose and said nothing then danced around the Prophet (sa) in a circle. "What is this?" asked the Prophet (sa) with amusement. Jafar replied, "I have seen Abyssinians honor the Negus in such a way. When the Negus gave anyone a good reason to be happy, that person would rise, then dance around him." In the months to come, the Prophet (sa) arranged for Umarah to marry Salamah. Salamah was the son of Lady Umm Salamah and her martyred husband, Abu Salamah, was the son of Hamza's sister, Barra.

CHAPTER 113 THE TURNER OF HEARTS

Khalid, had for some time, respected the Prophet (sa) but his pride and position in the Koraysh tribe prevented him from entertaining the promptings of his heart. However, after each encounter, no matter whether it had been a victory or defeat, reason started to erode his resistance and the light of truth began to prevail as he accepted the fact that his values were based on nothing other than baseless, traditional pride. He remembered the letter his younger, convert brother Waleed had written to him just before he died and how it had mentioned that the Prophet (sa) had inquired about his welfare and spoken of his regard for him; then there was his brother's last wish which urged him to embrace Islam. His younger brother was not the only one in his family to convert to Islam, there was his aunt, now Lady Maymunah, the wife of the Prophet (sa), and more recently his own mother, Asma.

THE VISION OF KHALID

The matter weighed heavily on Khalid's heart, then, one night he saw a vision in which he first found himself in a barren land, closed in from all side. Then, he saw himself in a land lush with vegetation, with seemingly never-ending green fields. It was a vision he could not dismiss and felt a compelling urge to go to Medina. He wanted to share his vision with Amr but he had not as yet returned to Mecca so he went to his friends Ikrima and Safwan to tell them. Both the fathers of Safwan and Ikrima -- the infamous Abu Jahl -- had been killed at Badr, and Safwan had also lost his brother, so, in reflection, their replies were not surprising. Safwan was so adamant that he declared, "If every man of the Koraysh decided to follow Muhammad, I would not follow him!" so Khalid did not pursue the matter further and set off for Medina alone.

KHALID AND OTHMAN

Shortly after leaving home Khalid met Othman, another friend, who was closer to him than the other two. The two rode in silence for several miles, then, Khalid spoke in a tone that prompted a reply, "Our situation is no better than a fox in his lair -- pour a bucket of water into it and it must come out!" Othman was quick to understand Khalid's point, so Khalid ventured further and told him where he was going and the reason. Othman was of the same

mind as Khalid and decided to accompany him to Medina. However, Othman was unprepared for the journey so Khalid agreed to wait for him while he returned home to gather some clothes and provisions. Early, the next morning Othman joined Khalid again and together they set off for Medina.

AMR AL-AS'S SON

Amr Al As's son held the same opinion as Safwan and Ikrima, but viewed the situation in a different light than his friends. Amr did not let emotions sway his reason, he was shrewd and known to analyze a situation then act accordingly. In the early days of Islam when Muslims sought refuge in Abyssinia, it was he that had attempted to bribe the court of the Negus to ensure support for their return. His efforts had failed miserably and he left Abyssinia without achieving his goal, however, over the years he fostered a friendship between himself and the Negus. Occasionally he would send gifts together with his greetings, however he never mentioned the matter of the Muslims to him again.

AMR AND THE NEGUS

Amr decided to visit the Negus, and together with several of his companions from the tribe of Sahm set out across the sea to Abyssinia taking with them much prized gifts of leather. When Amr reached the court of the Negus he was courteously given an audience whereupon Amr presented the leather gifts. After having surmised his presence was acceptable Amr wasted no time asking the Negus for permission to stay in his country. However, Amr's tongue slipped when he ventured to speak about the Prophet (sa) in an unacceptable manner. The Negus held the Prophet (sa) in great esteem and would not tolerate a word said against him and warned Amr that the best way for him in his court would be to become a follower of the Prophet (sa) rather than bringing him gifts. Amr was shaken by his reply and asked, referring to the prophethood, "Do you bear witness to this, O king?" Without hesitation the Negus replied, "Indeed, I bear witness to this before Allah." The Negus continued, "Do what I advise Amr and follow him. He is the truth and by Allah he will triumph over anyone who sets himself against him; in the same way that Moses triumphed over Pharaoh and his army." Amr took his leave from the Negus and set off for the sea. As he journeyed he pondered deeply upon the issue of the prophethood and could no longer push aside the truth the Prophet (sa) brought that Allah is One and has no associates, and that idolatry was worthless. He reflected upon the Prophet's character, his exemplary life style and his just dealings with everyone, no matter whether they believed in his message or opposed him. He could not accuse the Prophet (sa) of any wrongdoing. Days later he came across a boat destined for Yemen so he boarded and set sail. As for his companions, it is unknown whether they accompanied him or remained in Abyssinia. When Amr reached Yemen he bought a camel together with some provisions and rode northwards with the intention of going to Medina. At a place called Haddah -- which was one of the stops on the coastal route from Mecca to Medina -- he met Khalid. After a while they confided their intention to one another, however, both expressed deep concern whether or not they would be accepted into Islam, for they had both been responsible for the

persecution and martyrdom of many Muslims.

KHALID EMBRACES ISLAM

When Khalid and Amr reached Medina Khalid went straight to the Prophet (sa) and embraced Islam.

AMR’S CONCERN

Amr was unaware that when a person embraces Islam all their previous sins, no matter whether they are major or minor are completely wiped out so the convert starts his/her life absolutely anew, clean and sinless. He was also completely unaware that the Prophet (sa) had informed his companions that every sin committed before Islam is automatically exchanged for merits that await them in Paradise.

AMR’S HESITATION

When it came time for Amr to give convert he was very apprehensive, but finally he asked the Prophet (sa), "Give me your right hand so that I may swear allegiance to you." As the Prophet (sa) reached out to take his hand, Amr quickly withdrew it whereupon the Prophet (sa) inquired, "What is the matter Amr?" Amr replied that he had a condition to make, which was, that all his past sins would be forgiven. Much to Amr's relief, the Prophet (sa) gently told him, "Don't you know that (embracing) Islam wipes out all the sins that have gone before?" Amr's heart leapt for joy and he embraced Islam. From that time onward no one was dearer to him than the Prophet (sa).

CHAPTER 114 THE EIGHTH YEAR

It was now eight years since the Migration. Early that year there had been yet another great sadness in the Prophet's household as Lady Zaynab, the eldest daughter of the Prophet, had been taken ill and passed away. The Prophet (sa) was with his daughter as the angels took away her soul and offered comforting, reassuring words to his young granddaughter and son-in-law. When it was time to make arrangements for her burial the Prophet (sa) asked Umm Ayman, Ladies Swaydah and Umm Salamah to prepare his daughter. After the completion of the ritual washing the Prophet (sa) removed an underwrap he was wearing and told them to wrap her in it before her shrouding. Then, he led the funeral prayer after which the funeral procession sadly made its way to the graveyard where she was lowered gently into her place of rest and the Prophet (sa) prayed for her once more.

THE LONG AWAITED NEWS

Lady Khadijah was the only wife to bear the Prophet (sa) children. None of his later wives conceived his child, although, Ladies Umm Habibah and Umm Salamah had borne children by previous marriages. Not long after Lady Zaynab's death, his wife Lady Maryam became pregnant. It was a time for great rejoicing; companionship and help abounded as everyone waited for the blessed event.

CHAPTER 115 THE INTERCEPTED LETTER

Approximately three months had elapsed since the pilgrimage when the Prophet (sa) sent fifteen companions in peace to invite the tribes along the border of Syria to Islam. Several of the border tribes were hostile and when word reached them that the companions were about to arrive they lay in wait and ambushed them with showers of arrows. The companions defended themselves as best as they could, but their effort was to no avail, and all but one was martyred. A while before, the Prophet (sa) sent Dihyah Al Kalbi to the governor of Bostra with a letter for Heraclius, the Christian, Emperor of Rome (ruled from 610 CE - 641 CE) whose vast empire reached as far west as the river Danube in Europe, the Balkans, the Mediteranean countries, Turkey as well many Arab countries that read:

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful. From: The Prophet of Allah To: Heraclius, the greatest of Romans Peace be upon those who follow Divine Guidance. I therefore invite you to embrace Islam. Surrender to Allah and live in peace. Allah will doubly reward you, but if you turn away, the sin of the Arians will rest upon you."

Then he quoted the Koran:

'Say: People of the Book! (Jews, Nazarenes and Christians) let us come to a common word between us and you, that we will worship none except Allah, that we will associate none with Him, and that none of us take others for lords beside Allah.′ If they turn away, say: ‵Bear witness that we are Muslims′ Koran 3:64

However, Heraclius had not replied so a second messenger was dispatched to Bostra with a duplicate letter, but this time the letter was intercepted by the chief of the Christian tribe of Ghassan who seized it and unjustly put the messenger to death.

HERACLIUS WISHES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROPHETHOOD OF MUHAMMAD (sa)

Now that there was a treaty between the Prophet (sa) and the Koraysh, Abu Sufyan knew he could rely upon the safe passage of his caravan to trade in far away Syria (Ash-Shams). When Heraclius learned of a caravan traveling from Mecca he sent a rider with a message to the caravaners saying he wished them to accompany his rider back to Jerusalem as he wished to speak with them. As Abu Sufyan and his caravan journeyed to Jerusalem, he wondered why the Emperor of Rome had sent for him but he didn't have to wait long. As soon as they

reached Jerusalem, Abu Sufyan and his companions were presented to Heraclius and his court whereupon Heraclius called for an interpreter and inquired about Prophet Muhammad (sa). He asked Abu Sufyan and his companions who amongst them was closest in kinship to the Prophet (sa). Abu Sufyan replied that it was he and told him that the Prophet (sa) hailed from a noble lineage. Then, Heraclius turned to his companions and said, "If he says something you know to be contradictory, you must speak." Heraclius' questions were direct. He asked Abu Sufyan if any of his tribe had ever before claimed to be a prophet whereupon Abu Sufyan replied that none had. Then he asked if any of his ancestors had been a king and Abu Sufyan replied that they had not. Heraclius was interested to know what kind of people followed the Prophet (sa) and if their numbers were increasing or decreasing. Abu Sufyan told him that they were poor people and that their numbers were increasing. Then, Heraclius asked if he knew of anyone of his followers had reverted to their old religion, and Abu Sufyan replied that he knew of none. Referring to the Prophet's character Heraclius asked Abu Sufyan if he had ever known the Prophet (sa) to lie, or if he had ever betrayed or broken his word, whereupon Abu Sufyan replied no to all counts, then, referring to the latter Abu Sufyan commented in a tone of resentment, "We have a treaty with him, but we do not know what he will do." Heraclius asked next if they had ever fought against the Prophet (sa) and if so, to tell him about the outcome. Abu Sufyan replied that they had fought; sometimes they had been victorious and upon other occasions victory belonged to the Prophet (sa). Then, Heraclius inquired about his teachings whereupon Abu Sufyan told him that the Prophet (sa) ordered his followers to worship Allah alone and not to associate anything with Him, and to renounce the idols their forefathers had worshipped. Abu Sufyan continued to tell him that the Prophet (sa) also ordered them to pray, not to lie, to be chaste and to foster kindred relationships. From these answers Heraclius derived his opinion of the Prophet (sa) saying, "All the prophets came from noble families, I asked you if anyone before him from your tribe claimed to be a prophet and your reply was no. If your reply had affirmed it then I would have deduced he was mimicking that man. I asked if any of your ancestors had been a king, you replied they had not. If your answer had been otherwise I would have assumed that he wanted to reclaim his ancestral kingdom. When I asked if he lied, you replied that he did not, so I wondered how a person who does not lie could ever tell a lie about Allah. I also asked you about his followers, whether they were rich or poor and you replied they were poor -- the followers of all the prophets were poor. When I asked if his followers were increasing or decreasing, you replied increasing; this is the course of true belief. Then, I asked if there was anyone, who, after embracing Islam recanted and you replied that you knew of none; this is another sign of belief as it enters the heart. When I asked you if he had ever been known to betray, you replied that he had not; this is the way of all prophets. Then I asked you what he ordered his followers to do, and you told me that he orders that Allah alone is to be worshipped, and forbade the worship of idols. Then you told me that he orders you to pray, speak the truth, and be chaste. If what you say is true, he will, in the near future occupy this seat." Then Heraclius told Abu Sufyan: "I knew he was about to appear, but did not know he would be from you. If I could be sure of him I would go to him an wash his feet." Then Heraclius called for the letter the Prophet (sa) had sent him awhile before and read it aloud whereupon there was a sudden outcry from the court and Abu Sufyan and his companions were thrown out onto the street. As

soon as they were able to pull themselves together Abu Sufyan told his companions, "He has become so prominent that even he is afraid of him!" Abu Sufyan was a proud man and his reputation mattered greatly to him and was heard to say in the years to come, "By Allah, if it were not for the fact that I would have been ashamed that my companions label me as a liar, I would not have told the truth."

THE ENCOUNTER AT MUTAH

Although the slaying of the Prophet's messenger to Heraclius may appear to have been a minor incident, it was not. It was of political importance and as such could not be overlooked as a matter of justice had to be served against the perpetrators. The Prophet (sa) called upon three thousand of his companions to take up arms and placed Zayd in command with the instructions that if he were to fall then Jafar, Abu Talib's son should succeed, then Abdullah, Rawahah's son. He told his companions that in the event that all three were no longer able to command they were to choose their own leader. As they left upon their mission, the Prophet (sa) handed Zayd a white banner and rode out with him and his men to the pass known as the "Pass of Farewell" which lies to the north of Uhud. When the Muslims reached the border of Syria they learned that a legion of the Roman army together with Arab tribes from the north had banded together against them. Reports reached them that their numbers were quite possibly a hundred thousand, which was far in excess of their own. However, there was always the possibility that they were less, but that did not discount the fact that their army would, in any event, be much greater than their own. It was time to call for a council meeting; the majority were in favor of sending a messenger back to the Prophet (sa) with the daunting news, so that he might decide whether they should return or send reinforcements. Abdullah was against such action and as before, at the encounter of Uhud, he encouraged them to go forward in the Name of Allah and concluded with the stirring words, "We are certain of two things that are before us. We will either be given victory or martyrdom and join our brothers in the Gardens of Paradise -- let us go forward!" As before, Abdullah's words spurred them on and they continued to march northwards. A few hours after having reached the Dead Sea their eyes fell upon their enemy. It was apparent that they were indeed greatly outnumbered and the very sight of the Roman legion donned in their armor with their shinning weapons and cavalry laid pale the sight of the Koraysh army at Badr. The enemy had already taken up their positions ready to advance with the Roman legion at its center flanked by the Arab tribes on either side. It was not to their advantage to engage them immediately so Zayd issued the order to withdraw southwards to a place called Mutah where the terrain offered more protection. However, the enemy spotted their arrival, and wishing to finish the matter in the shortest time possible, marched after them. As soon as Zayd reached Mutah he ordered the Muslims to prepare themselves for the hostilities.

THE VISION OF THE PROPHET (sa)

As the attack was launched against them, the Prophet (sa), who remained in Medina, had a vision and saw Zayd with the white banner leading his men into the hostilities. He witnessed

Zayd sustain many wounds until, finally, he lay martyred on the battlefield. He witnessed Jafar take the banner from Zayd and saw him fight valiantly until he too was overcome. Then, in obedience to his instructions, he saw Abdullah seize the banner and charge against the enemy. As the ferocity of the hostilities intensified he saw Abdullah martyred as the Muslims were driven back. Then he witnessed Thabit, Arkam's son take hold of the banner and give it to Khalid, who at first declined the honor, telling Thabit that he was more worthy of it than he. As Thabit insisted, the Prophet (sa) heard Thabit telling Khalid that he had only taken it so that he could give it to him, and so it was that Khalid took command. Khalid rearranged the ranks so that their effort would be more effective and as a result they were able to hold off the advance of their enemy and ensure a safe retreat. The enemy were victorious, although there was nothing to gain; the hostilities were over and to the wonder of all, apart from the three commanders only five believers were martyred. Khalid had demonstrated both skill and wisdom during the encounter and after it was over, the Prophet (sa) with tears in his eyes gently informed his companions of the martyrdom of Zayd, Jafar and Abdullah then said, "One of the Swords of Allah took the banner, and Allah opened the way for them." And so it was that Khalid was often referred to as "The Sword of Allah." The devoted Umm Ayman, who cared for the Prophet (sa) since childhood, and watched Zayd grow into manhood in his household, as well as Zayd's wife and his much loved son Osama were in the same house, and the Prophet (sa) went to break the news to them and console them with the blessings of their martyrdom. Zayd had been among the first to embrace Islam and had always been very dear to him since he had chosen to remain in his household rather than return to his own family so many years before. The Prophet (sa) went next to Jafar's house. As he entered he asked Asma, Jafar's wife, to bring her three sons to him. Asma went to fetch them, but already perceived something was amiss. When the boys entered, the Prophet (sa), with tears welling up in his eyes gently kissed each of them on his forehead and began to weep. Then, Asma asked, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), you are dearer to me than my father and mother, why do you weep? Have you received news of Jafar and his companions?" thereupon the Prophet (sa) gently broke the news and she too began to weep whilst the women of her household rushed to her side to try to comfort her. The Prophet (sa) departed and asked for food to be prepared and sent to them in the coming days as he knew their mourning would prevent them from tending to their needs. As the Prophet (sa) returned home from his uncle's house, Zayd's little daughter came running up to him in the street with tears streaming down her darling little face, whereupon the Prophet (sa) bent down and held her tightly to him. It was a very emotional moment and tears flowed like a river from the Prophet (sa) as his body heaved with sobs. Sa’ad, Ubadah's son happened to be passing by and saw them, then, trying hard to find suitable words could only say, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), what is the matter?" Amidst his tears he replied, "This is one who loves to long for his beloved." The time for prayer was at hand and the Prophet (sa) went to the Mosque to lead the congregation, then returned home immediately without his customary glance towards them; he did the same after both the evening and night prayers. That night as the Prophet (sa) slept he saw a vision in which the Muslims, together with Zayd, Abdullah and Jafar -- who was flying with wings like those of an angel -- had all entered Paradise. At the dawn prayer, the congregation sensed that the Prophet (sa) felt less saddened as once again he turned his face towards them. Directly after

the prayer, the Prophet (sa) went to Asma to tell her of his vision, and although she grieved for her beloved husband, she was happy for him and her heart was at rest.

THE RETURN OF KHALID

Days later, news of Khalid and his fellow Muslim′s approach to Medina reached the Prophet (sa) whereupon he asked for his mule, Duldul, to be brought to him, then, he seated Jafar's eldest son on it and together they rode out to meet the returning companions. Many of the citizens of Medina had gathered upon the road leading into the City and as Khalid led the companions they shouted words of rebuke as they threw dust at their faces asking why they had fled from fighting in the way of Allah. When the Prophet (sa) heard the shouts he rebuked them saying, "No, they are not fugitives, rather, they are returning to fight again, if Allah wills."

RENEWED TURBULENCE

The recent encounter at Mutah encouraged the northern Arab tribes to initiate a further uprising against the Muslims. Winter was now upon them and within a month news reached Medina that the tribes of Kudadh and Bali intended to march against them and had already joined forces in large numbers on the Syrian border, however, this time they learned that the Roman legion was not amongst them. The Prophet (sa) commissioned Amr, whose mother was from the tribe of Bali, to lead three hundred Muslims with the instruction to try to enlist the support of other tribes and if unavoidable, engage the enemy. The march to the Syrian border took just ten days, but as Amr approached hostile territories he and his men would, on many a night, make use of its darkness to march then rest during the day to avoid attracting unwanted attention. One night in particular was very chilly, so when they reached their final halt for the night many searched for firewood to light a fire. When Amr realized what they were doing he gave the order that no one should light a fire, for the smoke and blaze might well be detected and their presence revealed. Although it made sense not for the fires to be lit, there was dissatisfaction among some of his men and he had to remind them that they had been ordered to hear and obey him. Scouts were sent to bring back news of the enemy and returned with the news that their numbers exceeded those anticipated. As of yet the Muslims had not succeeded in securing the support of other tribes along the route so Amr sent a messenger from the tribe of Juhaynah back to Medina with a request to the Prophet (sa) to send further reinforcement. When the Prophet (sa) learned of their need, he sent Abu Ubayda with a two hundred men. Abu Ubayda was a close companion of the Prophet (sa) as well as being a veteran campaigner and had been given the instruction that there should be absolute cooperation between the two contingents. When Abu Ubayda reached Amr it was perhaps natural to suppose that he should be the commander, however, Amr was not agreeable as he held the opinion that Abu Ubayda's forces were auxiliary and the appointment should remain as it was. Abu Ubayda was not a proud man and submissively stepped aside saying, "Just in case you should disobey me, by Allah I will obey you." Later, when the Prophet (sa) heard of Abu Ubayda's gesture he was touched by his degree of sincerity and supplicated for blessings

upon him.

THE SYRIAN BORDER

Amr led his reinforced army across the Syrian border, but as they approached their enemy decided not to engage them -- that is except for a short interval in which arrows were fired -- and dispersed. As Amr pressed forward they came across the vacated camp sites, and like the wind, news of the enemy's retreat swept across the desert. It was time for the neighboring tribes inclining to friendship with the Muslims to venture forward. Until now they had not wished to expose themselves, and so new and faded ties were soon cemented between them, some of which, were for the present, politically motivated, rather than through spiritual conviction as they knew the Prophet (sa) to be not only a fair but just and powerful ally. And so Amr was in the blessed position of being able to send word back to the Prophet (sa) that their influence had been reestablished along the Syrian border.

CHAPTER 116 THE TRIBES OF BAKR AND KHUZAH

The tribe of Bakr had allied itself to the tribe of Koraysh, whereas the tribe of Khuzah had more recently allied itself to the Muslims at Hudaybiyah. There had been a feud between the two tribes for many years but despite the ten-year peace treaty of Hudaybiyah, in which both parties had taken part and bound by honor to observe, the tribe of Bakr was still bent on prolonging the feud. One night shortly after Amr's return from Syria, the tribe of Bakr attacked the tribe of Khuzah and killed one of their tribesmen. During the skirmish the Koraysh assisted their allies with a supply of weapons and some even went so far as to take part in the fighting in the sacred area -- an area in which fighting had always been strictly forbidden. Tribesmen from Ka'b, a branch of the Khuzah, rode in haste to Medina to request the Prophet's help. When he learned of the unprovoked attack he told the envoys to return and that he would come to their assistance. As the Prophet (sa) entered Lady Ayesha's apartment she could tell from the expression on his face that all was not well as he asked her to bring some water so that he might renew his ablution. As he poured the water over his limbs she heard him say, "May I not be helped if I do not help the sons of Ka'b," whereupon she realized the grave implications.

ABU SUFYAN JOURNIES TO MEDINA

The participation of men from the Koraysh in the attack concerned their fellow tribesmen and so they decided to send Abu Sufyan, who had been away from Mecca at the time of the signing of the treaty, to the Prophet (sa). Abu Sufyan set out upon his journey, however, he had not gone far when he encountered the men from the tribe of Ka'b riding toward him and knew that the Prophet (sa) had been informed of the serious breach of the peace. As soon as Abu Sufyan reached Medina he went straight to the Prophet (sa) but could discern from his expression that he viewed the situation as grave. In an attempt to make light of the situation,

Abu Sufyan began by saying, "Muhammad, I was absent at the time of the truce at Hudaybiyah, let us strengthen the treaty and increase its duration." The Prophet (sa) replied with a question asking, "Has anything occurred so as to break it on your part?" The question made Abu Sufyan feel uneasy and reluctantly he replied, "Allah forbid!" Whereupon the Prophet (sa) commented, "We are keeping the truce for the stated period and will not accept another in its place."

ABU SUFYAN TRIES TO ENLIST THE SUPPORT OF THE HOUSEHOLD

The situation was serious, so Abu Sufyan left the Prophet (sa) and went to visit his daughter, Lady Umm Habibah, whom he had not seen for fifteen years, hoping that perhaps she might sway the Prophet (sa). As he entered her apartment he greeted her and proceeded to try to sit down on the Prophet's rug, but his daughter removed it whereupon he asked, "Is the rug too good for me, or am I too good for the rug?" Respectfully, Lady Umm Habibah replied, "It is the Prophet's rug, and you my father remain an idolater, unpurified," she continued, "you are the lord of the Koraysh, their chief, how is it that you have not embraced Islam and remain worshipping stones which can neither see nor yet hear?" Pride once again covered his heart as he replied, "Am I to forsake what my fathers worshipped in order to follow the religion of Muhammad?" Abu Sufyan realized that his daughter was not receptive so he went to visit Abu Bakr, as well as several of the other close companions of the Prophet (sa), to try to convince them to intercede, as although the Prophet (sa) had not said the words that he viewed the treaty void, he sensed it to be so. Each of the companions gave the same response with Abu Bakr concluding with the words, "I only give protection within the bounds granted by the Messenger of Allah (sa)." Finally, Abu Sufyan went to visit Ali at his home hoping that he would get some leverage from him on account of their common ancestry and close ties of kinship. Having reminded Ali of their kinship he prevailed upon him in the same manner as before, but Ali told him he was not prepared to speak in favor of anything to which the Messenger of Allah (sa) was adverse. Lady Fatima happened to be in the same room with her young son Hasan and heard the conversation, so Abu Sufyan turned to her saying, "Daughter of Muhammad, ask your young son to grant protection between man and man, so that he may become the lord of the Arabs," whereupon Lady Fatima commented, "Boys so young as this do not grant protection." Abu Sufyan left Ali's house and went to the Mosque where he proclaimed in a loud voice, "I grant protection between man and man, and I do not think that Muhammad (sa) will fail to uphold me." Then he went to the Prophet (sa) saying, "O Muhammad (sa), I do not think you will deny my protection." However, the Prophet (sa) answered: "This is your opinion," whereupon Abu Sufyan returned despondently to Mecca.

CHAPTER 117 THE ROAD TO MECCA

When Prophet Muhammad (sa) prepared for an encounter, he would often march out in the opposite direction of the enemy, then march towards them thereby taking the advantage of surprise. The Prophet (sa) now issued the instruction that preparations should be made ready

for a campaign, when Abu Bakr asked him about it he confirmed that they were to engage the Koraysh, whereupon he inquired, "Don't we have to wait until the time of the truce is over?" The Prophet (sa) replied, "They betrayed us and broke the truce, so I shall march against them. However, keep the matter secret and let them think that the Messenger of Allah (sa) is marching on Syria, or to Ta'if, or yet on the tribe of Hawazin." Then he supplicated saying, "O Allah, remove us from the sight of the Koraysh as well as our news and plans, so that we may come upon them suddenly in their land."

THE MESSAGE

The supplication was answered. Gabriel came and told him that Hatib, one of the Muhajir, who had fought at Badr, had learned of his intention and sent a letter to the Koraysh via a woman from the Muzaynah who was traveling to Mecca to inform them. The Prophet (sa) sent Ali and Zubair after her and upon catching her up they searched her baggage but could not find it. The companions realized that the woman must have hidden the letter on her person and told her that if she did not produce it voluntarily, they would be forced to search her. Not wishing to be searched, the woman unloosened her hair and produced the letter she had concealed in it and gave it to them.

"DO WHATEVER YOU WILL, I HAVE FORGIVE YOU".

When the companions returned to Medina, Hatib was sent for and the Prophet (sa) asked, "Why did you do this Hatib?" "O Messenger of Allah (sa)," replied Hatib, "I believe in Allah and His Messenger, my belief has not changed -- nothing else has taken its place. I have no influence amongst the people of Mecca so, for the sake of my son and family who remain there, I sought their favor." Omar was outraged and exclaimed, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), let me do away with him, he is a hypocrite!" But the Prophet (sa) gently reminded him saying: "Omar, don't you know that Allah looked upon the men of Badr and said, 'Do whatever you will, I have forgiven you?'"

v THE MONTH OF RAMADAN

Ramadan was fast approaching and the Prophet (sa) sent his envoys to allied, trustworthy tribes calling upon them to meet him in Medina at the beginning of the month. The allied tribes responded in full force so that the Prophet's force was greater than ever before, however, their final destination remained unknown to even their chieftains. Only those severely incapacitated remained in Medina as the combined forces of nearly ten thousand set out upon their march. As for their destination, it still remained a secret.

THE COMPASSION OF THE PROPHET (sa)

The march to Mecca was never easy, and now that Ramadan had come it would prove very

tiring for some, so after they had set out Prophet Muhammad (sa), who always promoted the moderate way, sent word to the Muslims saying, "Whosoever wishes to keep the fast, let him keep it, but whosoever wishes to break it, let him break it." For Allah permits the breaking of the fast for those on a journey and allows the lost days to be made up later on, however, the Prophet (sa) and many others decided to continue to fast.

‟(Fast) a certain number of days, but if any one of you is ill or on a journey let him (fast) a similar number of days later on; and for those who are unable (to fast), there is a ransom the feeding of a needy person..... ‟ Koran 2:184

ABBAS AND HIS FAMILY EMBRACE ISLAM

Halfway to Mecca, the Prophet (sa) called for a halt and it was there that the Prophet's uncle, Abbas, his wife Umm Fadl and sons joined him. A few days prior to this, Abbas and his wife decided they wanted to embrace Islam so they packed as much as they could to take with them and left Mecca in secret for Medina, not knowing that the Prophet (sa) was at that very moment marching towards Mecca. Upon reaching the Prophet's camp they asked to be taken to him, it was a great reunion and happiness swelled their hearts as they embraced Islam and gave their allegiance. After, the Prophet (sa) told Abbas that as his own prophethood was the last of all prophethoods, so had Abbas' migration been the last of migrations. Shortly after arrangements were made for Umm Fadl to be accompanied to Medina whilst her husband and sons joined their fellow Muslims in the preparation for the forthcoming siege. When the army reached Kudayd, the Prophet's army was joined by the nine hundred strong cavalry of the tribe of Sulaym who pledged their support and informed him of their prowess on the battlefield. Still, none except a privileged few knew their final destination.

THE PROPHET (sa) BREAKS HIS FAST

When the army reached a placed called Marr Az Zahran, the Prophet (sa) broke his fast and ordered those who had maintained the fast to break theirs so that they might regain their strength. Speculation was rife, for Marr Az Zahran lay on the route to not only Mecca, which was but two days away, or one if they force-marched, but also to the land of the very hostile tribe of Hawazin. Then again, there was always the possibility that their destination could be Ta'if. The matter of their destination was on the tongues of many and so Ka'b, Malik's son, composed a short verse in which he did not directly ask the Prophet (sa) for the name of their destination but arranged its words in such a way that the message was delivered in a courteous manner. It was not time to divulge their destination and so the Prophet (sa) just smiled and Ka'b returned without an answer.

THE THAKIF

News of the Prophet's army reached the people of Ta'if who feared an attack on their temple

dedicated to their idol, al-lat. The Thakif sent an urgent letter to the neighboring tribes of Hawazin in the Najd informing them of the Prophet's advance. All but a few acted upon the call to arms and soon their armies began to assemble at a vantage point to the north of Ta'if.

THE BONFIRES

Meanwhile, as the army approached Mecca, the ten thousand strong army of the Prophet (sa) was ordered to spread itself out, encircle Mecca and light bonfires as soon as night fell. As night fell the fires were lit and the Koraysh were engulfed in panic as cries of alarm rang throughout the City. Until that very moment, Allah had prevented any of its citizens from learning of their presence, and none knew to whom the bonfires belonged. Abu Sufyan tried his best to ascertain to whom the bonfires belonged but to no avail. Speculation was rife, some thought that it might be the Prophet (sa) then discounted it on account of the size of the army and many assumed it to be some other force. In the darkness of the night, Abu Sufyan accompanied by Lady Khadijah nephew, Hakim, who had tried to prevent the Koraysh from fighting at Badr, and Budayl from the tribe of Khuzah, rode out of Mecca together to determine who it was that had surrounded the City. As they approached the camp they saw a man riding a white mule coming toward them -- it was Abbas.

PEACE RATHER THAN WAR

The Prophet (sa) had sent Abbas on to Mecca bearing a message. When Abbas met Abu Sufyan he told him that the Prophet (sa) had come to Mecca with an enormous army, however, it was not his wish to fight, rather, it was to enter Mecca peacefully. Abbas advised him that in his opinion it would be far better to surrender rather than to fight.

THE PROPHET (sa) MEETS ABU SUFYAN

Abu Sufyan asked to meet with the Prophet (sa) so Abbas gave him his protection and took him to him. As the foursome made their way through the camp Omar recognized Abu Sufyan and cried out for all to hear, "Its Abu Sufyan, the enemy of Allah!" and ran after him with the intent to kill him. However, Abu Sufyan's mount was too swift for Omar and they reached the Prophet's tent a little ahead of him. As Omar entered the Prophet's tent he asked his permission to kill Abu Sufyan on account of the many Muslim lives that had been lost under his command, but Abbas intervened saying that Abu Sufyan was under his protection and so Omar became quite. Abu Sufyan started to present his case saying, "Muhammad, you have come here with a strange assortment of men against your kinsmen; some I know, others I do not." Before Abu Sufyan could continued, the Prophet (sa) spoke saying, "You broke the treaty of Hudaybiyah, assisting the attack on the kinsmen of Ka'b. You also violated the Holy Precinct and His House." Abu Sufyan said weakly, "Would that you had turned your anger against the Hawazin, they are not as close in kinship, and stronger in their hatred of you." The Prophet (sa) replied, "Allah willing, He will grant me all of that by victory over Mecca and with the

triumph of Islam there. And that by routing the Hawazin, He will enrich me with their property and their families as captives." Then the Prophet (sa) addressed the three men with kindly encouragement saying, "Bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and that I am the Messenger of Allah." Hakim and Budayl embraced Islam without further hesitation, but Abu Sufyan remained silent.

ABU SUFYAN EMBRACES ISLAM

Abu Sufyan was taken to Abbas' tent where he spent the night in safety. The next morning Abu Sufyan was taken to the Prophet (sa) who asked him, "Abu Sufyan, don't you realize that there is no god except Allah?" In a meek voice Abu Sufyan replied, "If there had been another, he would by now, have helped me." The Prophet (sa) continued, "Abu Sufyan, isn't it time you understood that I am truly the Messenger of Allah?" Abu Sufyan did not reply immediately, but then commented referring to the protection he had received despite Omar's request, "I know you to be a generous, forgiving man, however, I am still unsure." Abbas, had remained silent until that moment now turned to Abu Sufyan and said, "Why not believe now as I do." There was another silent pause, then, in a clear voice Abu Sufyan proclaimed, "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." It was a time for thanksgiving. Now that Abu Sufyan had become a Muslim, the Prophet (sa) asked him to return to Mecca and inform its citizens that they would enter Mecca the following morning, and Abu Sufyan agreed.

ABU SUFYAN'S HONOR IS UPHELD

Abu Sufyan was a proud man and had commanded the rest of his fellow Koraysh tribesmen for many years, with this in mind Abbas now approached the Prophet (sa) with a suggestion that would ease the situation for him. The suggestion was that Abu Sufyan be given a position of honor. The Prophet (sa), never wishing to belittle anyone, agreed and spoke now to Abu Sufyan saying, "Inform your people that when we arrive, anyone seeking refuge in your house will be protected and that those who remain in their homes or within the precincts of Ka'ba will also be protected."

CHAPTER 118 THE OPENING OF MECCA

Until now, the banners and flags of the various tribes had remained folded. The Prophet (sa) now called for them to be brought to him and then presented them to chosen bearers. Before Abu Sufyan returned to Mecca the Prophet (sa) instructed Abbas to take him to the narrow end of the pass so that he could witness for himself the size of the army as it passed by. One by one the tribes passed through, then one in particular caught Abu Sufyan's attention and he asked, "Who is that?" Abbas replied that it was Khalid, Waleed's son. When Khalid reached Abu Sufyan he exalted Allah three times saying, "Allahu Akbar - Allah is the Greatest!" Khalid rode with the tribe of Sulaym who were followed by Zubair, wearing a yellow turban, leading

five hundred Muhajir as well as some others. He also exalted Allah as he passed Abu Sufyan and soon the whole valley took up the exaltation so that it echoed throughout the valley. One by one the troops passed by and Abu Sufyan was astounded to see so very many tribes over which the Koraysh had no influence, but moreover he witnessed many a tribe that had until recently been hostile to the Prophet (sa) marching with them together as one army. Abu Sufyan could not help but exclaim, "Of all the Arabs, these were among the most ardent enemies of Muhammad!" Abbas smiled and said, "Allah has caused Islam to enter their hearts -- all this is by the Mercy of Allah." The Prophet's own contingent of Ansars and Muhajirs, heavily clad in armor were led by Sa’ad, Ubayda's son, and brought up the rear. As Sa’ad passed Abu Sufyan he called to him saying, "Abu Sufyan, this is the day of slaughter! The day of the abasement of the Koraysh by Allah!" which troubled Abu Sufyan deeply.

SA’AD AND THE BANNER

The Prophet (sa) rode upon Kaswa in the middle of the contingent accompanied by Abu Bakr and Usayd. As he passed Abu Sufyan, Abu Sufyan called to him saying, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), have you ordered the death of your people?" then repeated the disturbing words Sa’ad had uttered. Abu Sufyan continued, "I plead with you by Allah for your people, for you of all men are the greatest in piety and very merciful." The Prophet (sa) laid his fear to rest saying, "This is the day of mercy, the day in which Allah has raised the Koraysh." Abdur Rahman and Othman then spoke to the Prophet (sa) saying, "O Messenger of Allah (sa) there is a possibility that Sa’ad will attack the Koraysh." The Prophet (sa) shared their concern so he sent word to Sa’ad that he should hand over the banner to his son, Kays, who was less zealous than his father. When Sa’ad received the message he was unsure whether the message was correct so he told its bearer that he would not hand it to his son until he received proof that it was from the Prophet (sa). When the message was relayed to the Prophet (sa) he unwound the red turban from his helmet and sent it to him, and Sa’ad, without the least hesitation, handed the banner to his son.

ABU SUFYAN'S RETURN

Now that the army had passed by Abu Sufyan returned to Mecca and went directly to the hill of Safwa where he called upon the Koraysh to join him there. No sooner had they gathered than he spoke saying, "The fires we saw around us last night were those of Muhammad and his followers. He has come here with an extremely large army, we are grossly outnumbered; there are too many of them to fight! Therefore, I advise you to surrender. He has told me that those who seek refuge in my house, or choose to stay in their own homes, or within the precincts of Ka'ba have been granted safety." Hind, Abu Sufyan's wife grabbed her husband by his mustache saying, "Kill this good-for-nothing bladder of a man -- you are a wretched protector of your people!" Abu Sufyan retorted, "Do not let this woman deceive you against your better judgment, because what is coming cannot be resisted!" The crowd took heed of Abu Sufyan's warning and dispersed.

RAMADAN 21ST

It was now the 21st day of Ramadan, and as the Prophet (sa) and his army approached Mecca all was quiet; there was neither sight nor sound of any activity. Kaswa, the Prophet's mount, suddenly stopped in her tracks whereupon the Prophet (sa) bowed his head in sincere thanksgiving so much so that his beard almost touched her saddle. Then he called upon his army and placed Khalid in command on the right and Zubair in command on the left with his own contingent remaining in the center, which he proceeded to divided into two sections. One contingent was led by Kays and Sa’ad and the other, in which he himself would ride, by Abu Ubayda, then, he gave the order that they were to enter Mecca from four directions.

ABU BAKR'S FATHER

Soon after Abu Sufyan's speech, Abu Bakr's blind, elderly father, Abu Kuhafah asked his daughter Kuraybah to guide him up onto of the hill of Abu Kubays where she would be able to keep him informed of the events that were about to unfold. Abu Kuhafah had witnessed so many things during his life time, he had been in Mecca when Abraha attempted to destroy Ka'ba with the elephant's might, and now he was about to witness its opening. Kuraybah described the scene to her father but after she related the division of the army into four he asked her to take him back home. As they made their way to the City, they were overtaken by a troop of cavalry but they were not harmed, however, one of the riders snatched Kuraybah's silver necklace from her neck but they arrived home in safety. Abu Bakr's father and sister were not the only ones on Abu Kubays. Ikrima, Safwan and Suhail as well as several other Koraysh warriors had grouped together there with some allies from the Bakr and Hudhayl tribes. They were determined not to surrender so when they saw Khalid and his men riding forward to enter the City they swooped down and attacked them. Khalid and his army were vastly superior to those of Ikrima and his friends and killed thirty of them, whereas they themselves only sustained the loss of two. Seeing that their effort was futile, Ikrima and Safwan escaped to the coast, whilst Suhail retreated to his house and locked himself inside.

THE PROPHET'S PEACEFUL ENTRANCE INTO MECCA

The Prophet (sa) entered his beloved Mecca from the pass of Adhakhir riding Kaswa. Soon after he drew her to a halt, dismounted, then prostrated, praising and thanking Allah for His victory. His pious actions did not go unnoticed by the Koraysh and they began to realize that he had indeed come in compassionate peace.

PREACHERS NOT FIGHTERS

Just then, the Prophet (sa) caught sight of Khalid's men whose swords still remained drawn after they had been forced to protect themselves just a short while before, and said, "Didn't I forbid fighting?" However, when he was told of the circumstances, he said, "Allah has decreed

it for the best." In the meantime, the Prophet's tent had been erected within sight of Ka'ba and it was there that his wives, Ladies Umm Salamah, Maymunah and daughter Lady Fatima awaited him together with his cousin Umm Hani who had come to intercede for two of her kinsmen.

THE INTERCESSION OF UMM HANI

Two of Umm Hani's kinsmen by marriage -- one of whom was the brother of the infamous Abu Jahl -- had taken part in the attack against Khalid and had sought refuge with her in her home. When Ali learned that she was in Mecca, he had gone to her home to greet her, but as he entered he saw them and had drawn his sword. Umm Hani exclaimed that he must not kill them as she had given them her protection and threw a cloak between them saying, "By Allah, you will have to kill me first!" and so honorably Ali sheathed his sword and left. Umm Hani now waited in the Prophet's tent to intercede for their lives. As he entered he greeted his cousin affectionately and she told him what had happened, whereupon he informed her that whosoever she made safe would be protected.

THE PROPHET (sa) PERFORMS THE RITES AROUND KA'BA

After having taken the major ablution, the Prophet (sa) offered eight units of prayer, then rested for a while. A while later he asked for is camel to be brought to him. Then he donned his armor and helmet, leaving his visor up, buckled his sword and carried a staff in his hand. As he left his tent several of those that had accompanied him in the morning had lined up outside waiting for him to come out and together they made their way to the Ka'ba. As they approached the Ka'ba, the Prophet (sa) rode to its south-east corner and reverently touched the Black Stone with his staff as he exalted Allah, which was then taken up by those by his side. Soon the exaltation of "Allahu Akbar" was taken up by all the Muslims and rang throughout the Holy City until the Prophet (sa) made the gesture to be silent. Then, Muhammad, Masalamah's son from the tribe of Aws, took hold Kaswa's bridle as the Prophet (sa) circumambulated Ka'ba seven times.

NO MATTER WHO WE ARE, WE ARE ALL THE CHILDREN OF ADAM

By now, many Koraysh had left their homes to join the Muslims around the Ka'ba and the Prophet (sa) spoke to them saying, "There is no god except Allah, He has no partner." Then he called upon them saying, "O people of the Koraysh do not be proud, all people are equal. We are all the children of Adam, and Adam was created from dust." Then he recited a verse from the Koran that reads:

"People, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you might know one another. The noblest of you before Allah is the most righteous of you. Allah is the Knower, the Aware." Koran 49:13

After the recitation he addressed the Koraysh saying, "O people of the Koraysh, what do you think I am going to do with you?" There was a silent pause, then someone said, "You will treat us as a kind kinsman or as a merciful brother would." Thereupon the Prophet (sa) quoted the words of Prophet Joseph saying:

"I shall ask my Lord to forgive you. He is Forgiving, the Most Merciful." Koran 12:98

THE FEW THAT WERE NOT PARDONED

All except eleven men and six women were immediately pardoned that day. However, from their number were seven men and four women who embraced Islam and were subsequently pardoned; because when a person embraces Islam all previous sins are forgiven by Allah. Amongst those who were not pardoned was the son of Khatl, who, after embracing Islam some years before in Medina, had taken the name Abdullah. During this time the Prophet (sa) entrusted Abdullah with the honored position of collecting, from a certain tribe, the obligatory charity after Ramadan, however, he became arrogant, abused his authority and killed a serving Muslim simply because his meals were not served on time. Abdullah knew that there was a severe penalty to pay for killing another Muslim and had feared that if he returned to Medina he would be put to death on account of the gravity of his sin, so instead he went to Mecca where he renounced Islam. The son of Khatl was not content in renouncing Islam, he seized every opportunity to attempt to degrade the Prophet (sa) and had purchased two slave girls to sing songs that ridiculed and mocked our beloved Prophet (sa). On this special day, a companion happened to notice him clinging to the black cloth covering Ka'ba, so he told the Prophet (sa).The Prophet (sa) informed the companion that the son of Khatl was not amongst those to be pardoned and so he was put to death.

THE NEW CONVERTS

Later on that day, the Prophet (sa) made his way to the hill of Safwa and the mixed crowd of Muslims and those whom Allah had just blessed to let Islam sway their hearts, followed him. There, the new converts took his noble hand and professed their belief as they swore their allegiance before him. Amongst those to convert was Hind, who, only an hour or two before, rebuked her husband for his stance. She came to the Prophet (sa) with her face veiled as she feared, rather than expecting his mercy, that he might order her death before she had a chance to embrace Islam. It was only after she had embraced Islam that she dared to raise her veil and the Prophet (sa) welcomed her. Ikrima's wife, Umm Hakim also embraced Islam and begged the Prophet (sa) to protect her husband even though he had just led the attack against him. The Prophet (sa) pardoned him and Umm Hakim asked permission to leave to go and find him then bring him back. Ever caring, the Prophet (sa) was aware that Utba and Muttalib, the last of the sons of his uncle, Abu Lahab, were not present and asked Abbas, "Abbas, where are your brother's two sons, Utba and Muttalib? I have not seen them?" Utba had married the late Lady Rukiyah but his father forced him to divorce her before the marriage

was consummated and it appeared that they were afraid to present themselves, so Abbas was asked to bring them to him. When they arrived, the Prophet (sa) took them by the hand and walked with them to a part of the wall of Ka'ba called Al Multazam, which lies between the Black Stone and the door of Ka'ba. There, the Prophet (sa) supplicated at length to Allah and as he finished supplicating joy was evident upon his face. Abbas remarked upon his apparent joy whereupon the Prophet (sa) replied, "I asked my Lord to give me these two sons of my uncle, and He has given them to me."

THE HUMILITY OF THE PROPHET (sa)

Abu Bakr had left the presence of the Prophet (sa) to visit his father and soon returned with both his father and sister. When the Prophet (sa) saw them he asked out of concern, "Abu Bakr, why didn't you leave him in his house so that I might go to him?" Abu Bakr replied, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), it is more fitting that he comes to you than you go to him." The Prophet (sa) invited Abu Bakr's father to sit beside him and received them into the fold of Islam.

THE MIRACLE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE IDOLS

After the last of the new converts embraced Islam, the Prophet (sa) pointed his staff towards the three hundred and sixty-five idols lodged in and around the Ka'ba and recited:

"Say: 'Truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Indeed, falsehood will certainly vanish.'" Koran 17:81

whereupon each and every idol toppled over and fell flat upon its face in broken pieces! The Prophet (sa) then ordered that if anyone had an idol in their home it must be destroyed. Following this the Prophet (sa) and his followers went to the Ka'ba and purified it, then, he asked Bilal to climb to its roof and call the believers to prayer, and so the prayer was offered. After the prayer, the Prophet (sa) spoke to the congregation saying:

"On the day Allah created the heavens and earth He made Mecca Holy. It is the most Holy place until the Day of Resurrection. It is unlawful for those who believe in Allah and the Last Day to shed blood in it, or to cut down trees therein. However, Allah has permitted me to do it for an hour. Mecca is now restored to its former Holiness. Let those present go forth and tell others."

SUHAIL

As the Koraysh were embracing Islam, Suhail had remained in his home. He was aware that an amnesty was in effect but did not suppose himself to be included so he asked his son, Abdullah, to go to the Prophet (sa) to see if he could intervene for him. When Abdullah

approached the Prophet (sa) he responded mercifully assuring him that he was safe saying, "He is safe under the protection of Allah, let him come to me." Then he turned to his companions and told them not to look upon Suhail harshly when they met him. He also told them that Suhail was an intelligent and honorable man, not one to be blind to the truth of Islam. And so Suhail was free to come and go as he pleased, however, he chose not to enter Islam at that time.

SAFWAN

Umair spoke to the Prophet (sa) about his cousin, Safwan, so the Prophet (sa) agreed to give him respite for two months. With this news Umair set out in search of his cousin. He finally caught up with him at Shuayba -- the nearest port to Mecca -- awaiting a boat. Umair told him of the Prophet's respite but Safwan was suspicious and refused to change his plans. There was nothing else for Umair to do but to ride back to Mecca and bring back a recognizable token from the Prophet (sa) that would confirm the authenticity of the promise. When the Prophet (sa) learned of Safwan's doubt he gave Umair his turban made of Yemeni cloth to allay Safwan's fear. When his cousin returned with the turban, Safwan knew the message was genuine so he and his cousin returned to Mecca. Upon reaching Mecca, Safwan went to the Prophet (sa) and said, referring to embracing Islam, "Umair tells me that if I agree to something, all well and good, but if I do not you have given me two months' respite." The Prophet (sa) tried to coax him and replied, "Stay here." But Safwan replied, "Not until you have given me a definite answer." "You shall have four months' respite," replied the Prophet (sa) and so Safwan agreed to stay in Mecca.

IKRIMA

Meanwhile, Ikrima had reached Tihama, a coastal village, with the intention of boarding the next ship to Abyssinia. As he was about to board its captain, who feared being shipwrecked on account of having idolaters on board, would not accept any passenger that refused to accept Allah as his Lord and Creator, said, "Make good your religion with Allah!" Ikrima was surprised and said, "What shall I say?" "Say, 'there is no god except Allah," replied the captain. At that moment, the truth entered Ikrima's heart and he embraced Islam under the captains' hand. His reason to set sail for Abyssinia to escape Islam was now baseless and so Ikrima did not embark and the ship set sail without him. Not long after his wife, who had been searching for him, found him and gave him the good news of his protection and they traveled back to Mecca together. The Prophet (sa) knew that Ikrima was about to arrive and compassionately told his companions, "Ikrima, the son of Abu Jahl is coming to you, as a believer. Do not revile his father because reviling the dead is offensive to the living and does not affect the dead." When he entered Mecca, Ikrima made his way to the Prophet (sa) who greeted him with much happiness in his heart, and Ikrima renewed his acceptance of Islam with him. Then, Ikrima asked the Prophet (sa) to supplicate to Allah for His forgiveness on account of the enmity he had once held towards him, and so the Prophet (sa) supplicated for him.

MAXIMIZING GOODNESS

After the supplication Ikrima mentioned all the money he had spent in an effort to prevent the spread of Islam as well as the money he spent on the wars he waged against the Muslims. He now told the Prophet (sa) that from no onward he would spend double that amount on Islam and fight with double the effort in the Way of Allah; Ikrima was true to his word.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE OF AL UZZA

Now that Mecca had been opened, the Prophet (sa) sent Khalid to Nakhlah, famous for its temple to the idol of al uzza, that attracted many pagan pilgrims. When its priest heard of Khalid's approach he went into the temple, hung his sword on the statue then called upon her to defend herself or to become a monotheist then fled. Khalid experienced no resistance and soon the temple lay in ruins and its idol smashed into unrecognizable pieces. Now that his mission was over he returned to Mecca.

CHAPTER 119 THE ENCOUNTER AT HUNAIN

The days of Ramadan were now complete and the joyous congregation of Muslims was able to offer their thanksgiving at their beloved Ka'ba, it was indeed one of the most happiest times they had ever experienced.

THE HAWAZIN

Outside Mecca all was not well. The Hawazin were greatly alarmed when they learned of the destruction of the temple of al uzza at Nakhlah, which was the sister shrine to their own idol of al lat, and had amassed an army of twenty thousand in the valley of Awtas, just north of Ta'if. The tribes now joining forces with the Hawazin were those of Thakif from Ta'if, Nasr, Jusham and that of Sa' d Bakr's son -- from which Halima, the foster mother of the Prophet (sa) hailed -- commanded by Malik from the tribe of Nasr who was in his own right a distinguished warrior. The Prophet (sa) was aware of the impending danger and called upon his army to rearm. Its numbers were swelled by a further two thousand from the Koraysh amongst whom were Suhail and Safwan, neither of whom had as yet converted but wished to fight in defense of their property and City. The Prophet (sa) had been told that Safwan possessed a hundred coats of mail together with many kinds of weapons, so he asked whether he might borrow them. Safwan asked, "Muhammad, is it a case of give or else I will take?" "No," replied the Prophet (sa), "it is a loan to be returned." Safwan was satisfied, as he knew the Prophet (sa) to be a man of his word whereupon he added to the loan a sufficient number of camels to transport the armor and weapons. The concept of waiting for the Hawazin to march on Mecca was not a matter for consideration on account of the inevitable blood shed which would occur on sanctified ground, so, the order to prepare for the march was given. Before setting out on their campaign, the Prophet (sa) appointed a man from the tribe of Shams to take charge of

Mecca in his absence and left Muadh, Jabal's son, who, despite his tender years, was very well versed in Islam, to teach the new converts. Meanwhile, Malik ignored the advice of the elders of the tribes and commanded that not only should their forces march against the Prophet (sa), but that their women, children and livestock should follow at the rear so as to give their menfolk more reason to fight with all their might.

THE SCOUTS

As the Prophet (sa) approached the enemy, Malik sent three scouts to assess the situation and bring him word. When the scouts returned Malik was greatly disturbed by their appearance. The scouts could scarcely speak and their limbs had become either dislocated or shook uncontrollably in sheer terror. After a time one managed to speak with a voice that trembled saying, "We saw white men riding piebald horses, then, suddenly we were stricken like this!" Then another spoke in a voice equal to that of his companion saying, "We are not fighting against humans, but people from Heaven. It is our advice that you withdraw; if you do not, as soon as the army see them they too will become like us!" Malik refused to pay attention to their warning and rebuked them sharply saying, "Shame upon you, you are the cowards of the army!" However, he ordered the men to be taken away out of the sight of the others so that the rest of the army would not and ask questions. Then, Malik turned to those around him and said, "Who amongst you is courageous?" A man stepped forward whereupon he was sent to assess the situation. A while later, the man returned in exactly the same condition as the three earlier scouts, and related the terrifying sight he had seen, but Malik was not to be deterred and once again refused to heed his impassioned warning.

THE VALLEY OF HUNAIN

Ravines surround the valley of Hunain, some of which are large with wide entrances and from the top of these ravines it was easy to monitor the movement of the Prophet's army without the risk of being seen. Night had now fallen so Malik gave the command to march to the valley as he knew the Prophet (sa) and his army would have to pass through it. When Malik and his army reached the nearest part of the valley, which was where the road slopped down into the valley, he called for his army to halt. He then issued orders for his cavalry to take up positions upon the top of the ravine and on its opposite slope, then, he told them that once he gave the signal they were to swoop down and massacre the Prophet's army. As for the remainder of his army they were commanded to take up their positions upon the road near the top of the pass. The Prophet (sa) and his army spent that night not far from the other end of the valley. Before dawn the following morning he and his men offered the dawn prayer then the Prophet (sa) spoke to them telling them that victory would be theirs if they were steadfast. As the light of dawn appeared the sky was overcast and so they were able to begin their descent through the valley under the cover of relative darkness. The army of the Prophet (sa) marched in a similar formation to the one it had taken before their entrance to Mecca with Khalid, the Sword of Islam, leading the tribe of Sulaym accompanied by some others. However, this time Khalid was followed by the new converts whilst the Prophet (sa) followed riding Duldul in the

middle of the Muhajir and Ansars accompanied by more family members than before. Amongst them were his cousins Abu Sufyan and Abdullah; his uncle Abbas and his sons Fadl and Kitham; as well as the two sons of Abu Lahab. The rear of the army was brought up by those who had not yet converted to Islam. They had almost finished their descent when, in the half-light of the dawn, their gaze fell upon the resting army of the Hawazin positioned on the opposite side of the slope above which were their women, children and auxiliary mounts, who, in the hazy light of dawn appeared as additional warriors. Before the army could take a safe stand, Malik spotted them and gave the signal to attack. The attack came swiftly as the Hawazin emerged from all directions and swept down upon Khalid and his men before he had chance to summon the tribe of Sulaym to take a stand. Many of the Sulaym lay martyred on the battlefield whilst the survivors fled into the midst of the Koraysh causing them to scatter and seek safety upon the slope from which they had just descended. Chaos prevailed as camels and horses stampeded and blocked the narrow entrance, however, the Prophet (sa) was able to withdraw to his right and together with a small band of men took a firm, courageous stand. Amongst those who took the stand were his relatives, Omar, Abu Bakr, some of the Muhajir and Ansar, and Abu Sufyan who stood at his side and held tightly to the ring of Duldul's bridle. During the confusion the unconverted Koraysh were heard to mutter against the Prophet (sa) whereupon Safwan spoke harshly to them in defense of the Prophet (sa) saying, "If I must have some one over me, let it be a man from the Koraysh rather than a man from the Hawazin!" The Prophet (sa) called upon the others to rally around him but in all the upheaval his words were drowned by the noise as swords clashed, mounts stampeded, and the cries of war filled the air. Abbas had an exceptionally loud voice and took up the call shouting: "Companions of the Tree! Companions of the Acacia!" There was an immediate response from the Muhajir and Ansar as their cries returned, "Labbayk! -- Obedient to you!" The small band of men that numbered approximately one-hundred engaged their enemy and for a moment held them at bay whilst Abbas continued to call the army to regroup and many of those who fled returned to stand alongside the Prophet (sa).

THE PEBBLES THAT EXALTED ALLAH

There was a momentary lull whilst the enemy prepared itself for a further attack whilst the Prophet (sa) supplicated to Allah saying, "O Allah, I ask of You Your promise." Then he asked for some pebbles to be brought to him. The pebbles were gathered and given to the Prophet (sa) and as he held them in his blessed hands, the pebbles exalted Allah in human speech, and as at the hostilities of Badr, he threw them in the face of the enemy.

SHAYBA, SON OF UTHMAN AL JUHANI

During the encounter at Badr, Hamza engaged and killed Othman al Juhani and his brother. From that time onward Shayba's hatred for the Prophet (sa) knew no boundaries, his hatred was intense. Shayba was intent on revenge and the opportunity was soon to be realized as Shayba crept up upon the Prophet (sa) with his sword in readiness to strike. However, before

he could reach the Prophet (sa) a blazing flame, faster than lightening appeared before him and he turned to run. The Prophet (sa) was aware of the circumstances and called out to Shayba in a calming voice and ask him to come to him. Trembling, Shayba approached the Prophet (sa) whereupon the Prophet (sa) smiled and placed his hand upon his chest. When he removed his hand Shayba's hatred had completely disappeared and the Prophet (sa) had become the most loved of all people to him. Then the Prophet (sa) spoke saying, "Draw near and fight." Shayba plunged in to fighting and was heard to say, "If I had met my father, I would have engaged him in combat rather than the Prophet (sa)."

THE MIRACLE OF HUNAIN

It was the turning point of the hostilities, Allah heard the supplication of His Prophet (sa) and sent invisible warriors against the enemy. It was a miraculous turn in the events. Malik continued to fight as best he could but was forced to retreat with part of the army from Thakif to their walled city of Ta'if. As for the majority of the Hawazin, they were forced to flee as far away as Naklah. Many had sustained heavy casualties whilst others returned to their camp at Awtas. When the Prophet (sa) learned of this he sent a detachment against them so that they were forced to flee to the surrounding hills. Victory was theirs with very little loss of life on the Muslim side after the initial encounter. Amongst those who were martyred was Osama's elder brother, Ayman, who fell as he stood by the Prophet (sa). Concerning the Encounter of Hunain Allah sent down the verses:

"Allah has helped you on many a battlefield. In the Battle of Hunain, when your numbers were pleasing you they availed you nothing; the earth, for all its vastness, seemed to close in upon you and you turned your backs and fled. Then, Allah caused His tranquility (sechina) to descend upon His Messenger and the believers; He sent legions you did not see and sternly punished the unbelievers. Such is the recompense of the unbelievers." Koran 9:25-26

As for the Hawazin women and children, they were taken captive. Amongst the spoils of war were large flocks of sheep, camels and goats as well as four thousand ounces of silver. These, the Prophet (sa) now placed in the capable hands of Budayl whom he instructed to take to Jiranah, a valley some ten miles outside of Mecca.

SHAYMA, THE FOSTER SISTER OF THE PROPHET (sa)

Amongst those taken captive was an elderly woman who asked to be taken to the Prophet (sa). When she was asked why she wanted to see him she said that her name was Shayma, the foster-sister of the Prophet (sa). It had been a very long time since the Prophet (sa) had seen Shayma and at first he did not recognize her but when she introduced herself to him and recalled some childhood stories, he had a rug spread out and invited her to sit with him as he endearingly inquired about her mother Halima and father Harith. As Shayma told the Prophet (sa) that both had passed away tears welled up in his eyes. They talked together for a while

and the Prophet (sa) asked if she wished to return to her tribe or stay with him. Shayma replied that she wanted to embrace Islam but wished to return to her tribe. Before Shayma took leave of the Prophet (sa) he gave her a handsome gift and told her he would give her more later on upon his return from Ta'if.

THE SEIGE OF TA'IF

Ta'if was a city fortified by strong walls from which well trained archers had the advantage of protection. Its fertile land abounded with orchards so Ta'if was capable of self-support when it came to providing food for its citizens.

ALWAYS FREE THE SLAVES.

As the Prophet's army approached the walled city they were met by volleys of arrows, that were returned with equal ferocity. One day during the siege, the Prophet (sa) instructed a herald to cry out that any slave belonging to the Thakif who wished to join them as Muslims would be set free and soon after the word had been passed among them, approximately twenty slaves slipped away from the city to embrace Islam. Three weeks had passed since the beginning of the siege and there was no progress, then, one night the Prophet (sa) saw a vision in which he was given a bowl of butter to which a rooster came, pecked and split it. The following day Abu Bakr went to the Prophet (sa) and said, "I do not think you will gain what you desire," and the Prophet (sa) agreed with him, then instructed his army to break camp and return to Jiranah. Whilst they were in the midst of breaking camp some asked the Prophet (sa) to curse the inhabitants of Ta'if but the Prophet (sa) did not reply, rather, he raised his hands and supplicated for them saying, "O Allah, guide the Thakif and bring them to us" for he always wanted good for people, even his adversaries. Very few casualties were sustained during the siege, however, amongst the martyred was Lady Umm Salamah's half-brother, the newly converted Abdullah, who was also the cousin of the Prophet (sa).

CHAPTER 120 THE SPOILS OF WAR

Upon reaching Jiranah, the Prophet (sa) found Budhayl had arranged for the captives -- six thousand women and children -- to be lodged in a very large enclosure protected from the sun. The captives had been well cared for and their needs met, however, it was noticeable that most were in need of new clothing so he gave a Khuzahite some silver from the spoils of war, and sent him to Mecca to buy new robes for each of them. The spoils of war remained undivided and the Prophet (sa) wished it to remain that way for the time being as he could, no doubt, expect to receive a deputation from the Hawazin requesting leniency and return of some of the confiscated property. However, Allah had decreed in the Koran that the Prophet (sa) should receive one fifth of the spoils and until he disposed of its responsibility it remained a burden to him for he was never one to hoard wealth. Allah had also instructed that charity should be spent on those attracted to belief and this applied to the new converts from the

Koraysh whose faith needed to be strengthened and encouraged.

"The obligatory charity shall be only for the poor and the needy and those who work to collect it, and to influence hearts (to belief) and for ransoming captives, and debtors in the Way of Allah and the destitute traveler. It is an obligation from Allah. Allah is Knowing, Wise." Koran 9:60

From the vast herd of twenty-four thousand camels the Prophet (sa) gave Abu Sufyan a hundred camels who then asked for a hundred camels each of his two sons Yazid and Muawiyah.

THE UPPER HAND IS BETTER THAN THE LOWER.

Lady Khadijah's nephew, Hakim, was given a hundred camels and asked for two hundred more to be added. The Prophet (sa) agreed but told him that whosoever took it in charity of his soul would be blessed by it, but whosoever took it for pride of his soul would not be blessed by it, and that he would become like one who eats but is never satisfied. The Prophet (sa) continued to advise him that the upper hand is better than the lower and that he should begin his giving with his family on account of their dependency upon him. Hakim was deeply moved by the Prophet's advice and told him that from now onward he would not accept anything from anyone else other than he. He also retracted his additional request for the extra two hundred camels. Safwan and Suhail were among those mentioned as eligible recipients in the Koran and were also given a hundred camels as were others of similar inclination.

THE CONVERSION OF SAFWAN

Later that day Safwan, who had already received his camels, rode together with the Prophet (sa) through the valley. In one part of the valley there was a pass which was particularly lush with vegetation and it was there that some of the herds had been taken to graze. It was indeed a beautiful, refreshing sight to see such an abundance of grazing livestock. The Prophet (sa) noticed how taken Safwan was by the sight and asked, "Does this pass please you?" whereupon he replied, "Indeed it does!" "Then," said the Prophet (sa) "it is yours, and all that is in it." The overwhelmed Safwan exclaimed, "I bear witness that no soul could be full of such goodness as this, if it were not the soul of a Prophet." Then in all sincerity he proclaimed, "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and that you are His Messenger."

THE CONVERSION OF SUHAIL

To be amongst Muslims could not help but make an impression upon Suhail and moreover he had just witnessed the miraculous victory at Hunain when all odds appeared to be against them. He had also been blessed to accompany the Prophet (sa) and had been greatly

impressed as well as touched by his noble, gentle character. Suhail had also been reunited with his son, Abdullah, and observed how upright he had become on account of his new faith and no longer felt in his heart any resistance to Islam, so he too became a Muslim. Three years later, when Abdullah was martyred, Abu Bakr went to console Suhail whereupon he replied, "I have heard that the Messenger of Allah (sa) said, 'A martyr shall intercede for seventy of his people.' It is my hope that my son will not begin with anyone before me."

OTHER CONVERSIONS

Amongst the other converts at Jiranah were several notables from the Makhzum tribe. The two brothers of Abu Jahl embraced Islam as did Khalid's half-brother Hisham; Zuhair, the son of the Prophet's aunt Atikah, who had many years before the Migration been instrumental in bringing about the cessation of the boycott levied against the persecuted Muslims in Mecca.

IMPATIENCE

The remaining spoils of war were not distributed immediately and several started to grow impatient for their share, however, the Prophet (sa) preferred to wait a few more days to see if the Hawazin and their allies intended to send a deputation to request the return or ransom some of the confiscated property. Several days had now passed and there neither word nor sign of a deputation and it seemed that no one was coming so the Prophet (sa) decided enough time had elapsed and that the spoils of war could now be distributed amongst his followers and so much to the delight of everyone the distribution began. Amongst those taken captive were the family and property of Malik, the commander of the Hawazin, and so with great wisdom and diplomacy the Prophet (sa) arranged for both them and their property to be escorted to his maternal aunt Atikah in Mecca for safe keeping and therefore not for distribution for the time being.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE DEPUTATION

The distribution of the spoils of war had just finished when a deputation from the Hawazin arrived. Amongst those accompanying the delegation was the brother of Harith, the Prophet's foster-father, who, upon meeting the Prophet (sa) told him that fourteen of his tribe had been Muslims for sometime and that the remainder of his tribe had recently embraced Islam. Harith's brother had come to the Prophet (sa) to ask leniency for the Hawazin with whom his tribe had kindred ties. Harith's brother was of the opinion that on account of the Prophet's connection with his own tribe, the tribe of Hawazin should also be considered as part of his extended family and said, "We nursed you on our laps and suckled you at our breasts." After presenting his case he then proceeded to ask the Prophet (sa) to be generous towards them. The Prophet (sa) told him that they had waited for several days for them to come and present their claim, but when they had not arrived the spoils of war had been distributed. Then, the Prophet (sa) asked which was dearer to them, their children and wives, or their possessions,

to which they replied, "Return our children and wives to us." The Prophet (sa) told them that the families given to him and the sons of Abd Al Muttalib were theirs, and that he would make an appeal for the return of the others. Then he told them that after he had led the noon prayer they should stand up and say, "We ask the Messenger of Allah (sa) to intercede for us with the Muslims, and we ask the Muslims to intercede for us with the Messenger of Allah (sa)." And so when the time arrived their spokesman arose and made the request to the congregation.

A BEAUTIFUL REUNION.

As the congregation remained seated after the prayer the Prophet (sa) addressed them and explained that they were asking for the return of their wives and children. The Ansar and Muhajir were quick to respond and the women and children allotted to them were released immediately. Other tribes followed their example whilst others refused until they received a promise that they would be compensated in the future. However, one young woman chose not to return to her tribe.

THE FAREWELL

As the deputation prepared to leave the Prophet (sa) fulfilled his promise and gave Shayma, his foster-sister, some more camels, sheep and goats. Just as they were about to depart the Prophet (sa) inquired about their commander, Malik, and was told that he was with the tribe of Thakif at Ta'if. The Prophet (sa) asked them to convey a message to him, which was that if he came to him as a Muslim he would return not only his family and possessions to him, but an additional herd of one hundred camels. In the meantime, Malik could not help but reflect upon the miraculous turn of events at Hunain neither could he dismiss the matter from his mind. When a messenger arrived at Ta'if the Prophet's message was conveyed to him whereupon he left Ta'if and journeyed back with the messenger to the Prophet (sa) where he embraced Islam. Malik's conversion was sincere, it was not just to regain his family and property, and in the days that followed it was he who played a major role in destroying the resistance at Ta'if.

WISDOM IN DISTRIBUTION.

The wisdom of the Prophet (sa) was not always immediately understood by some of his followers. The recent events were somewhat of a puzzlement as they were unable to comprehend why the Prophet (sa) had been so generous to chieftains and other nobility, who had not as yet embraced Islam or whose Islam was not yet deep rooted. They wondered why he appeared not have been so generous to those whose Islam was well established and were, for the most part, poor. The Prophet (sa) knew better than anyone else that Islam had power in itself to work upon the heart, and understood the underlying Koranic wisdom of giving to "those attracted to the belief," and had acted in accordance with its injunction of the

distribution. Sa′ad from the tribe of Zurah, like some others, had not as yet understood this wisdom and inquired why he had given Uyaynah from the tribe of Ghatafan, and Akra from the tribe of Tamim a hundred camels each whilst he had given nothing to his faithful, pious follower Juayl from the tribe of Damrah who was very poor. The Prophet (sa) replied gently saying, "By Him in whose Hand is my soul, Juayl is worth more than a world full of men such as Uyaynah, Hisan's son, and Akra, Habis' son; therefore I reconciled their souls so that they might submit to Allah, whereas I have entrusted Juayl to the submission he has already made." Sa′ad and several of the Muhajir who had gathered around him were overwhelmed by the magnitude of the Prophet′s statement and it was then that they understood the wisdom of his actions. Murmurings also stirred from the Ansars, who had supported the Prophet (sa) even before his arrival in Medina, as well as others from the Muhajir. Neither party could comprehend why they had received just four camels each, or their equivalent in sheep or goats, from the bountiful spoils of war, when they witnessed others, such as the Koraysh -- who they considered less deserving, and far wealthier than themselves -- being given much greater rewards. The discontent started to grow amongst the Ansars as satan, the stoned and cursed, caused them to think that the Messenger of Allah (sa) had rejoined his tribe and taken to favoring his people. Now it was being said, "We would like to know where this comes from. If it is from Allah we can accept it with patience, but, if it is none other than a thought which occurred to the Messenger of Allah (sa), we ask him to favor us as well."

THE DEAREST TO ME

Not long after the Prophet (sa) became aware of the murmurings and said, "It is true that I have given to some and not to others. Those to whom I did not give are dearer to me than those to whom I gave. I gave to those in whose hearts I felt was anxiety or unease; the others I left in their faith, understanding and self-reliance that Allah has instilled in their hearts." However, Abdullah, Masood's son went to the Prophet (sa) to tell him directly of the discontent and repeated the murmurings. As the Prophet (sa) listened to Abdullah his facial expression changed and he asked, "Who then is just if Allah and His Messenger are not?" He continued, "May Allah have mercy on Moses, he was caused more distress than this and was patient." Abdullah felt ashamed of himself for drawing the Prophet's attention to the matter and promised himself that he would never, ever again communicate anything of this kind to him. Then the Prophet (sa) turned to the Ansars and said referring to the new converts, ‟Aren′t you pleased that the people return with wealth but you return with the Prophet of Allah (sa) in your care?″ Tears welled up in their eyes and with tears of regret they wept as they replied: ‟We are indeed pleased with Prophet of Allah (sa)!″ As the Ansars began to realize the Prophet's wisdom they too felt ashamed and sorry they had questioned his decision, for there had never been a time when he had been unfair to them and knew that he would never do anything to earn the displeasure of Allah, and wept again because they had fallen prey to the whisperings of satan, the stoned and cursed.

CHAPTER 121 THE RETURN JOURNEY TO MEDINA

It was time to leave Jiranah for Mecca. As soon as Prophet Muhammad (sa) arrived in Mecca he offered Umra, the lesser pilgrimage, after which he returned to Medina to await the birth of his child. Medina was but a few miles away when Urwah, from the tribe of Thakif, caught up with the Prophet (sa), he had be amongst those present at the signing of the Treaty at Hudaybiyah and had been in Yemen during the recent encounter. At Hudaybiyah he had been greatly impressed by the message of Islam with its lifestyle, and was deeply touched by the respect the Muslims had for their Prophet (sa). Upon his return to Ta'if, he learned of the miraculous victory and felt the time had come for him to embrace Islam and so it was for this reason he had ridden post haste to catch up with the Prophet (sa). After having embraced Islam, Urwah expressed his earnest desire to return to the Thakif and tell them about Islam, but the Prophet (sa) warned him that they would not listen and kill him. Urwah was so sure he could convince them that he pleaded with him saying, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), I am dearer to them than their first-born." But the Prophet (sa) warned him again. Urwah asked the Prophet's permission once again and this time the Prophet (sa) agreed.

URWAH AND THE THAKIF

Urwah and the Prophet (sa) parted company and he rode on to Ta'if with high hopes of converting his fellow tribesmen to Islam. However, Urwah had misjudged the Thakif, for when he tried to tell them about Islam they rose up against him and became violent, forcing him to retreat to his home. Archers surrounded his house and arrows were fired into his home; soon after Urwah lay mortally wounded. As Urwah lay dying his family asked him what he thought about his death, whereupon he replied, "It is a blessing which Allah, in His Favor, has given to me." Just before he passed away he asked his family to bury him beside those that had been martyred during the recent siege, and so it was that his dying request was granted. When the Prophet (sa) learned of his martyrdom, he said, "Urwah is like the man in (the chapter) "Ya Seen". He called his people to Allah but they killed him.

"Then, a man came running from the furthest part of the village, 'My nation,' he said, 'follow the Messengers, follow those who ask no wage of you and are rightly guided. Why should I not worship Him who has originated me and to whom you shall be returned? What, shall I take, other than Him, gods who intercession, if the Merciful desires to afflict me, cannot help me at all, and they will never save me? Surely, I would then be in clear error. Koran 36: 20-24

Soon after his martyrdom, Urwah's son and nephew left Ta'if and journeyed to Medina where they converted and lived with Mughirah, one of their Muhajir cousins.

CHAPTER 122 A SON IS BORN

The last few days of Lady Maryam's pregnancy were upon her and the entire City anxiously awaited the babe's arrival. Salma, who had been the midwife to Lady Khadijah was now

elderly, offered to assist when the time came and now moved near to Lady Maryam's home in readiness for the blessed event. On a night soon after, Lady Maryam gave birth to a son, whereupon Abu Rafi, Salma's husband made haste to bring the joyous news to the Prophet (sa), however, before he could reach him, the Prophet (sa) had already been awakened by Angel Gabriel who greeted him in a way in which he had never greeted him before saying, "Awaken, O father of Abraham," and so he already knew that he had been blessed with a son. The dawn prayer was almost due and the Prophet (sa) waited until after it had been offered to make the much awaited announcement, and told the congregation that his son had been given the name Abraham. Shortly after the prayer, the Prophet (sa) went to greet Lady Maryam and see his darling son. It was a very touching moment as he held his son for the first time and thanked Allah for his safe delivery and well being of Lady Maryam. Everyone was excited and delighted by the news, especially Lady Maryam’s co-wives. Offers of help abounded from every quarter and in particular for the favor of nursing the infant. The Prophet (sa) chose the wife of a blacksmith to be Abraham's nurse as she lived near Lady Maryam's house.

CHAPTER 123 SMALLER EXPEDITIONS

The Prophet (sa) stayed in Medina for a further six months during which he organized several small expeditions, one of which was to the tribe of Autas.

THE DEATH OF UBAID

Ubaid, father of Amir, was placed in charge of an army sent to suppress the rebellious tribe of Autas. During the encounter Ubaid engaged Duraid, As-Simma's son in combat and killed him, however, during the hostilities a tribesmen from Husham aimed his bow at Ubaid and his arrow penetrated his knee. When his nephew, Abdullah, Kay's son, also known as Abu Musa, saw what had happened, he went to him and asked who had done this to him, whereupon Ubaid pointed to the man and he charged after him. The tribesman saw Abu Musa charging toward him and fled, but when Abu Musa challenged his honor saying, "Aren't you ashamed, won't you stop and fight," he stopped and they engaged each other in combat until the tribesman lay dead. Now that Abu Musa had accomplished his aim he returned to his uncle only to find that his condition had deteriorated. Ubaid had lost a lot of blood and asked his nephew to try to remove the arrow. Abu Musa managed to remove it but Ubaid sensed his time was nearing its end and said, "Convey my greetings to the Prophet (sa) and request him to supplicate for me to Allah and ask His forgiveness." Then, he instructed Abu Musa to take charge of the army and passed away. Upon their triumphant return to Medina, Abu Musa went straight to the Prophet (sa). As he entered his apartment he found him lying on the stalks of date-palm leaves that had been tied together with rope to form a mattress; when he arose the imprints of the stalks were visible on his back and side. Abu Musa related the details of the encounter then told him of the martyrdom of uncle and that he had sent his greetings to him and asked that he supplicate for him. The Prophet (sa) asked for some water to be brought to

him, whereupon he made ablution, raised his hands so high that the whiteness of his armpits were visible and supplicated saying, "O Allah, forgive Ubaid, father of Amir, O Allah on the Day of Resurrection raise him in rank above many of Your creation." After he had finished his supplication Abu Musa humbly asked, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), will you ask Allah to forgive me?" whereupon the Prophet supplicated, "O Allah, forgive the sins of Abdullah, son of Kays, and admit him through a fair entrance on the Day of Resurrection."

THE TRIBE OF TAYY

In one of the earlier expeditions, Ali had been sent to destroy the temple of the pagan god, manat, at Kudayd near the Red Sea. The mission had been successful and now that the second of the three most revered pagan temples had been destroyed only that of al lat in Ta'if remained. In a place called Fuls, which is to the north-east of Medina on land belonging to the tribe of Tayy, there was another pagan temple of lesser standing. However, the people of Tayy were not all pagans, some were Christians and Ali was sent once again to destroy the pagan temple. Upon the death of Hatim, the chieftain and poet of renown of the tribe of Tayy, his son Adi had risen to the rank of chieftain. Like his father before him, Adi was also a Christian. When news reached the tribe of Ali's advance, Adi and his family, with the exception of one of his sisters, fled.

THE HONORING OF NOBLE CHARACTERISTICS IN NON-MUSLIMS

The temple was destroyed and many of the Tayy were taken captive, including Adi's sister. Adi’s sister asked to speak with the Prophet (sa) and as she stood before him she told him that she was the daughter of an honorable chieftain whose name was Hatim Al Tayy, and was fearful that when other Arab tribes learned of her predicament they would gloat. She told the Prophet (sa) that during his lifetime her father had been well known for feeding the hungry, defending his family, freeing captives and never refused those in need. Upon hearing these honorable qualities the Prophet (sa) was heartened and smiled as he told her that her description of her father befitted that of a Muslim, and indeed, if her father had been a Muslim he would have asked Allah to have mercy on him. Then, without the slightest hesitation the Prophet (sa) not only released her so that she might return to her people, but returned her possessions and gave her a gift of a fine robe as well as a camel. When the companions saw the noble act of the Prophet (sa) they too released their captives from the tribe and returned their shares. Adi was not only relieved but delighted to see his sister safe and well, and amazed to see that not only his sister but the rest of her tribesmen had been returned with their possession - something which was completely unheard of in the days before Islam. She told her brother of her experience and encouraged him to go to Medina and see for himself. Adi was so impressed by his sister's account that he wasted no time and rode off to Medina.

A CIVILIZED SOCIETY NEVER BEFORE KNOWN WITH BALANCED SPIRITUAL AND MATERIALISTIC VALUES

Upon his arrival in Medina Adi could not help but be overwhelmed by the sight that met his eyes. There before him were Arabs from all corners of Arabia living in love and harmony with one another. The degree of organized civilization, combined with spirituality, culture and materialistic values was indeed to be marveled. Thoughtfulness, sincere love and care for one another was everywhere, but what impressed him most was the love they all shared for Allah and His Prophet (sa). It was far beyond anything he had ever encountered and it had never entered his mind that such devotion existed or could even exist. He realized that the civilization that now greeted his eyes pivoted upon the great love and obedience to the Prophet (sa) and the worship of Allah, the One and only God. He reflected upon how, until only a few years before, the tribes of Arabia had been so uncivilized. Very few had scruples about taking the life of another, senseless blood feuds were not only perpetuated but a way of life and perhaps the most despicable act of burying their innocent, newly born baby daughters alive then returning to their wives and enjoying intercourse was something so depraved that it was beyond all comprehension and decent human values.

A TIME FOR SELF-EXAMINATION, CHRISTIANITY MINUS IDOLATRY

It was time for self-examination of his own Christian belief and for the first time it occurred to him that his belief in the Trinity was parallel to that of idolatry. He reflected upon his knowledge of previous prophets and recognized the pattern that all, without exception, had preached the Oneness of the Creator. He realized that over the passage of time the religion he thought he was following had become corrupt but more importantly the Book given to Jesus no longer existed and only fragments remained. It also dawned upon him that Christianity was reprehensible because, unlike the pagan idolaters, it had in earlier times received Divine Guidance entrusted to Jesus, whereas the pagans had not. He reflected upon the creation of Adam and Eve and the fact that neither had parents, yet no one had ever attributed to them an association or kinship with Allah. There was no doubt in his mind that it would have been absolutely impossible for such a pure person as Jesus to claim that he was anything else except a prophet, born of a virgin mother and rejected the notion of his deity, recognizing the fact that Jesus, like Adam and Eve, were all miracles from Allah, the One and only Creator.

"Truly, the likeness of (Prophet) Jesus with Allah, is as the likeness of Adam, He created him from dust Then He said to him 'Be" and he was." Koran 3:59

His sister's description was unable to do justice to what he now witnessed and so he went directly to the Prophet (sa) and converted and pledged his allegiance. The Prophet (sa) welcomed him into the fold of Islam and told him that he was to remain as the chief of the Tayy. The noble treatment of the Holy Prophet (sa) and his companions had already deeply affected the former captives from Tayy. Their news was upon the tongues of every tribesmen and thereafter they too inclined to Islam and embraced it.

THE DEATH OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN WHO FOLLOWED PROPHETS JESUS AND MUHAMMAD

Eleven months after the Opening of Mecca, at the beginning of Rajab, the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet (sa) and informed him that the Negus of Abyssinia who had embraced Islam had passed away. After the obligatory prayer had been offered the Prophet (sa) informed the congregation of his passing saying, "A righteous man has died. Arise and pray for your brother Ashama." Thereupon, the Prophet (sa) led the congregation in the absent funeral prayer, and many reflected upon the Negus' justice and kindness towards them when they sought refuge many years before in his county.

CHAPTER 124 TABUK

It was now the ninth year and it was in the months that followed the victory of Hunain, that Heraclius, Emperor of Rome, captured the City of Jerusalem from the Persians who were then forced to retreat from both Syria and Egypt. Syria was now under the control of the Roman Empire and as such posed a threat to the newly emerging Islamic State. From time to time Nibataian traders from Syria would visit Medina to trade oil and brought news that Heraclius had set his sight upon conquering Medina and had gone so far as to advance a year's pay to his soldiers because he expected it to be a lengthy campaign. In addition to the rumors, disturbing reports reached Medina that Heraclius' army had already marched as far south as Balka and succeeded to secure the support of the Arab tribes of Ghassan, Judham, Lakm and Amilah.

THE VISION OF HERACLIUS

All but a few, privy to Heraclius, knew of a daunting vision Heraclius had during his campaign against the Persians. In the vision Heraclius had been told that a circumcised man would triumph in Syria, which he felt could be none other than the Prophet (sa) who had, some time ago, written him a letter in which he invited him to embrace Islam. It had been a vision of such compelling certainty that he could not dismiss it from his mind no matter how hard he tried. The vision bothered Heraclius to the extent that he restrained his army from marching any further south and issued orders to withdraw from Jerusalem to Homs as he was convinced that it would soon be conquered. In light of the vision he called for a meeting with his generals and proposed that a treaty should be made with the Prophet (sa) that gave him Syria in exchange for his promise not to advance beyond its northern limits. The generals were astounded, outraged at the proposal that he might even consider such a proposal and so Heraclius was forced to back down, although his vision was never far from his mind and bothered him constantly.

THE LARGEST ARMY YET IN ISLAM

Matters could not be allowed to deteriorate so the Prophet (sa) mustered the largest, best-equipped army ever before in the history of Islam. Until that time it had always been the

strategy of the Prophet (sa) never to disclose the true objective of a mission until the very last moment so that his plans would not fall into the wrong hands. In fact, he would often set out in the opposite direction to foil his enemies. However, this time was the exception, it was imperative that adequate preparations be made for the long journey to Tabuk which would take place during the summer, a season of intense heat, across the scorching desert sands with its blinding brightness. It wasn't until later that registers were drawn up in which the names of the participants of a campaign were recorded, so for those reluctant to march with the Prophet (sa), there was always a place of refuge in the shadows of the lush groves of Medina and the knowledge that unless Allah made it known to the Prophet (sa) their absence would remain undetected. To the hypocrites the thought of engaging the Roman army was daunting, especially as the enemy would have the advantage of being well rested whereas they would be weary from their arduous march and so they would congregate in the house of a Jew by the name of Suwailam and encourage others to join them. There were, however, some others who were not hypocrites that were slow to march with the Prophet (sa), their names were Ka'b, Malik's son; Abu Khaisamah; Murarah, Rabia Amiri's son, and Hilal, Umayyah Wakifi's son. Medina bustled with preparations and each day Ka'b would leave his home intending to prepare but never did. Wealthier Muslims were generous in spending in the cause of Allah and provided money to buy provisions, weapons and whatever was necessary. Othman, alone, contributed enough money to provide mounts and equipment for ten thousand men. However, despite the generosity of the wealthy there remained seven very poor, anxious Muslims remaining without mounts; five of them were from the Ansar and two were Bedouins, one from the Muzaynah and the other from the Ghatafan. In desperation they came to the Prophet (sa) and begged him to provide them with mounts, but there were none left and so with heaviness of heart, sensitive to their great sorrow, he broke the news that they were to remain behind as the journey would be impossible without a mount. The companions were grief stricken and broke down, weeping. Their sincerity is recorded in the Koran:

"... And when you said: 'I can find no mounts for you,' they turned back, their eyes streaming with tears, grieving that they could not find the means to spend." Koran 9:92

THE ARRIVAL OF THE BEDOUIN ALLIES

Now that their Bedouin allies had arrived the army was thirty thousand strong with a cavalry of ten thousand. It was expedient for a camp outside the City to be established to accommodate them as there was no room in Medina, and so the faithful, long time friend of the Prophet (sa), Abu Bakr, was placed in charge of the arrangements. When the time came to set off the Prophet (sa) led his army out of Medina, leaving behind the women, children, hypocrites, the sick, the disabled, the seven who could not find mounts, those whose faith was weak, and Ka'b, Abu Khaisamah, Murarah and Hilal. In addition to those that stayed behind, was Ali who the Prophet (sa) had instructed to remain with his family. Soon, the tongues of the hypocrites began to wag with false rumors that the Prophet (sa) found him a burden and did not wish for his company during the campaign. The words were so very hurtful that Ali

could no longer bear them, for he loved the Prophet (sa) more than his own life, so he put on his armor and rode out to catch up with him, and did so before he reached the first halt, with the intent of seeking his permission to join him. No sooner had he caught up with the Prophet (sa) he told him of the rumors whereupon the Prophet (sa) denounced them saying, "They lie. I asked you to remain for the sake of those I had left behind. So return, and represent me in my family and yours." The Prophet (sa) continued, "O Ali, are you not content that you should be to me as Aaron was to Moses, except that after me there is no prophet?" And so Ali returned with a contented heart to Medina.

THE MARCH NORTHWARDS

At dawn one morning thereafter, the Prophet (sa) was delayed and the time of prayer was about to expire. Everyone had assembled ready to pray behind him but when he did not appear, Abdur Rahman, Awf's son was elected to lead the prayer. At the beginning of the second unit of prayer the Prophet (sa) joined them and Abdur Rahman was about to step aside for him to lead the prayer, but the Prophet (sa) motioned that he should continued and prayed behind him. After the congregation concluded the prayer, the Prophet (sa) rose and offered the missed unit. The Prophet (sa) then complemented Abdur Rahman saying, "You did very well, for indeed, a Prophet does not die until he has been led in prayer by a pious man of his people."

ABU KHAISAMAH

Several days later, to escape the sweltering summer heat Abu Khaisamah decided to take a stroll in his garden underneath the cool shade of the trees. However, he received little comfort from it as his conscience troubled him even more than it had previously done so, as he had begun to hate himself for not riding out with the Prophet (sa). In the garden were two adobe houses belonging to his wives, as he approached them he noticed they had thrown water over them so as to keep them cool and that they had prepared a meal for him with a refreshing, cool drink of water poured from an earthenware jug. As he stood at the entrance of one of the homes he exclaimed, "The Messenger of Allah (sa) faces the glare of the sun, and is exposed to hot winds, yet Abu Khaisamah enjoys the coolness of the shade, with his food prepared by two good women, living at ease in his home!" Without further ado, he told his wives, "By Allah, I will not enter your homes until after I have joined the Messenger of Allah (sa), so prepare provisions for me." His wives brought food and water as he saddled his camel then he set off in all haste to join him.

THE RUINS OF THAMOOD

During the march across the desert the army took the route that would pass by the homes that once belonged to the people of Thamood. The fate of the people of Thamood was well known by the Muslims as Allah made mention of their disobedience to Him and their prophet

in the Koran. The only visible sign of their existence were their centuries old ruined homes hewn out of the cliffs. Before the army reached Thamood, the Prophet (sa) gave instructions that none were to stay there, nor yet drink or use its water.

"(Then) they hamstrung the shecamel and defied the order of their Lord saying to Salih: 'Bring down that which you have promised us if you truly are one of the Messengers.' Thereupon the earthquake seized them, at morning in their dwellings they were crouched, dead. He turned to them saying: 'I conveyed to you my nation the Message of my Lord and gave you counsel, but you have no love for sincere advisers.'" Koran 7:77-79

THE SPRING OF TABOOK

At a halt several miles outside Tabuk, the Prophet (sa) told his army, "Allah willing, tomorrow, you will reach the spring of Tabuk. You will not reach it until the sun is hot. Whosoever reaches it must not touch its water until I arrive. However, two of the first men to reach the spring had not heard the Prophet's order and drank from it and used the water to make dough. Later in the day, when the rest of the army reached the spring, the spring had become no more than a trickle and the Prophet (sa) inquired why his ordered had been disobeyed and told them to throw the bread away. Then, he gave instructions for the remaining water to be scooped up in handfuls and poured into a water-skin. After sufficient water had been collected, the Prophet (sa) washed his hands and face with it, then poured it over the rock that covered the mouth of the spring and as he did, he passed his hands over it whilst he supplicated to Allah. With a thunderous sound, water gushed forth and the entire army satisfied all their needs. Muadah happened to be standing by the Prophet (sa) as the water gushed forth and the Prophet (sa) turned to him saying, "O Muadah, perhaps you will live to see this place become an oasis with many gardens." And so it was that in the years to follow the prophecy was fulfilled.

THE ARRIVAL OF ABU KHAISAMAH

As the Prophet (sa) rested with his companions someone happened to mention that they had not seen Ka'b and asked where he was. A tribesman from the Salimah commented that he had not accompanied them because of his love of wealth, but Jabal's son jumped to his defense informing him that he only knew good things about him and chided the tribesman for speaking in such a manner. The Prophet (sa) made no comment. Not long after, the Prophet (sa) spotted a rider in the distance wearing a white cloak riding towards them and said, "Abu Khaisamah" and it was.

UNFOUNDED RUMORS

The Prophet (sa) stayed at Tabuk for twenty days and concluded that the rumors of the impending Roman attack were false. However, the march was far from wasted as he met with

two settlements, one Christian and the other Jewish, whereupon a peace treaty was drawn up between them, which would, in return for an annual tax guarantee their protection.

THE STRONGHOLD AT DUMAT AL JANDAL

Now that the danger was over, the Prophet (sa) sent Khalid together with a cavalry of four hundred and twenty on to Dumat Al Jandal that lay to the north-east of Tabuk, and was just five halts from Damascus. Dumat al Jandal was an important location on the road between Iraq and Medina as well as Syria. During this time, Khalid happened to be out hunting when, quite unexpectedly he came across Ukaydir, an Arab chieftain who owed allegiance to the Roman Empire. Khalid spoke to Ukaydir about Islam and shortly after they journeyed to Medina where he embraced Islam and allied himself to the Prophet (sa).

CHAPTER 125 THE RETURN FROM TABUK

Upon the Prophet's return he learned that his daughter, Lady Umm Kulthum had passed away. Both the Prophet (sa) and Othman, her husband who had also been at Tabuk, were deeply saddened by the news and went to her grave where the Prophet (sa) prayed for her. Othman had been a good husband to his daughter and the Prophet (sa) consoled him saying that if he had another unmarried daughter he would have given her to him in marriage.

THE EXCUSES

Before the Prophet's arrival in Medina, Ka'b had become filled with anxiety and began to invent excuses in his mind so as to escape his displeasure for not having accompanied him to Tabuk. He asked family members what they thought he should say, but in his heart he knew the right thing to do would be to tell the truth. Now that the Prophet (sa) had returned he went to the Mosque and offered his customary two units of prayer before receiving people. There were about eighty men that had not taken part in the campaign and one by one they approached the Prophet (sa) as he sat in the Mosque to offer their excuses. He accepted their excuses, renewed their oath of allegiance and supplicated to Allah for their forgiveness, committing to Allah whatever they had in their mind.

A TIME OF TRUTH

When Ka'bs turn came, he was so ashamed that he felt sick inside. He greeted the Prophet (sa) who smiled, but, his displeasure was apparent upon his face. He asked Ka'b to come forward, so he approached and sat down before him, then inquired what had kept him from accompanying them, then asked whether perhaps it had been because he had not purchased a ride. The feeling of shame and sickness increased as Ka'b told him that if the Prophet (sa) had been another person he would have attempted to offer a plausible excuse, however, he told him that he knew in his heart that if he were to do so, Allah would cause him to be

displeased with him over some other matter. So Ka'b told him of his hope that if he told the truth, even though he knew it would earn his displeasure, that Allah would be merciful toward him. So Ka'b told him that he had absolutely no excuse at all. Upon hearing this the Prophet (sa) said to those present, "This one has told the truth." Then he looked at him and said, "Leave us now until Allah decides your case." Sadly, Ka'b got up and made his way out of the Mosque with his head hanging down in shame and regret. Some of the Salimah tribesmen followed him out of the Mosque saying, "We have never known you to sin like this before!" Others said, "Why didn't you make up an excuse as the others did and ask the Prophet (sa) to supplicate for forgiveness for you?" They kept pestering and rebuking him so much that at one point he was almost about to return and offer an excuse, but he did not. Ka'b asked if there had been anyone else that had done likewise and offered no excuse. His companions told him that there were two others, Murarah, and Hilal. Ka'b knew these to be good Muslims and that they had been among those that fought at Badr, so he knew he had done the right thing by telling the truth. Soon after, people who had known the three started to avoid them, so that they felt as if they were strangers in a foreign land. Their guilt for disobeying the Messenger of Allah (sa) was to lay heavily upon them, and continue to do so for fifty days. Murarah and Hilal shut themselves away in their homes in misery, weeping bitterly. As for Ka'b, he was younger than the other two and would go to the Mosque to offer his prayer even though everyone avoided him. In Ka'bs anxiousness to receive even the remotest amount of acknowledgement from the Prophet (sa), he would wait until everyone had left the Mosque after the prayer had ended and then go to greet him. He hoped that perhaps he might see his lips move, indicating a response to his greetings. Sometimes, when he was offering a voluntary prayer, he noticed the Prophet (sa) glance in his direction, but whenever he looked up, he looked away from him. A feeling of great pain, loneliness and deep regret accompanied all three. Ka'bs suffering increased still further when, one day, as he passed by the garden of his dearest cousin, Abu Katadhi, he decided to climb over the garden wall to see if he was there. Abu Katadhi was in the garden so he greeted him, but he did not return the greeting. In desperation, Ka'b said, "Don't you know I love you in the Name of Allah and His Messenger (sa)?" But Abu Katadhi just looked at him and said, "Allah and His Messenger (sa) know best." When Ka'b heard this he could not restrain his tears as he wept bitterly and returned home.

THE LETTER FROM KING GHASSAN

The following day when Ka'b was in the market place, he heard a Bedouin from Syria, who had come to sell some grain, making inquiries about him. The people in the market place directed him to Ka'b whereupon he handed him a letter from King Ghassan, the letter read, "We have heard your master has treated you unjustly, Allah has not made you to be humiliated. So come to us and we will treat you in a manner that befits you." Having read the letter, Ka'b thought to himself, this is yet another trial from Allah, so he threw the letter into an oven.

THE PASSAGE OF FORTY DAYS

Forty days had now passed without any Revelation being sent down concerning the three, when a messenger from the Prophet (sa) came to him telling him that from now on he must not associate with his wife. Ka'b asked whether Hilal and Murarah had received similar messages and was told that they had. He wondered if the message meant he should divorce his wife, so he asked the messenger if that was what it meant, but he told him it did not, so he told his wife to go and stay with her parents. In the meantime, Hilal's wife had gone to the Prophet (sa) to intercede for her husband. She told him that the only reason she had come was because Hilal was old and incapable of taking care of himself, so the Prophet (sa), in his mercy, permitted her to stay and look after him.

GOOD NEWS

Nine more days of isolation and heaviness of heart were yet to pass and the world seemed to close in upon the three and become narrow. Then, on the morning of the fiftieth day, as Ka'b was sitting by himself he heard a shout ring out from the top of Mount Salalah. He listened hard as the voice cried out, "Ka'b, Malik's son, good news!" Ka'b fell prostrate in gratitude, as he knew that relief had come at last. Only a few moments before, after the Dawn prayer, the Prophet (sa) informed the congregation that Allah, in His Mercy had accepted their repentance, whereupon several people rushed to bring them the good news. However, in his anxiousness to be the first to convey the good news, a tribesman from the Aslam had raced to the top of the mountain to call to Ka'b before those on horseback had a chance to reach him. Soon after, a man riding a horse arrived and confirmed the good news. Ka'b was so grateful that he gave him all his clothes and had to borrow something to wear to go and greet the Prophet (sa). On his way to the Mosque people rushed to greet him saying, "Blessed is the acceptance of Allah; Allah has accepted your repentance!" Ka'b went directly to the Prophet (sa) in the Mosque to greet him and with a voice full of happiness he said, "Be happy with this, the best of days since your mother gave birth to you." Ka'b asked the Prophet (sa), "O Messenger of Allah (sa), is this from Allah?" whereupon, the Prophet (sa) whose face shone like a moon as it always did when he was pleased, confirmed that it was so. Ka'b was ecstatic and wish to complete his repentance and wanted to give away everything he owned in charity, but the Prophet (sa) told him to keep a portion of it, so he kept a piece of land in Khybar. The Revelation that conveyed news of the forgiveness of Ka'b and his companions reads:

"In the hour of adversity, Allah turned (in mercy) to the Prophet, the Emigrants (of Mecca) and the Supporters (of Medina), who followed him when some of their hearts were above to swerve away. He turned to them, Indeed, He is Gentle, the Most Merciful. And to the three who were left behind, until the earth became narrow with all its vastness, and their souls became narrow for them, they knew there was no shelter from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them (in mercy) so that they might also turn (in repentance). Allah is the Turner, the Most Merciful. Believers, fear Allah and stand with the truthful." Koran 9:117 - 119

Concerning the hypocrites who offered false excuses, Allah sent down the following verses:

"When you return to them, they will swear to you by Allah that you might turn aside from them. Let them alone, they are unclean. Gehenna (Hell) shall be their refuge, the recompense for their earnings. They will swear to you in order to please you. But if you will be pleased with them, Allah will not be pleased with the evildoing nation." Koran 9:95 - 96

CHAPTER 126 THE DELEGATION FROM TA'IF

With the expansion of the Islamic State, the Thakif had become isolated in what they had deemed to be their stronghold of Ta'if. It had become virtually impossible for them to send caravans out to trade as Malik, their former commander at Hunain, together with others would attack their caravans and confiscate their merchandise. Such was their plight that they were no longer able to send their flocks to graze outside the city walls as they feared Malik's men would seize them and were in fear of his threat to put them to death if they were caught and refused to renounce their gods. Inside the walled city, things deteriorated to such an extent that it was decided that they would send a deputation to the Prophet (sa) saying that they would accept Islam and ask for a guarantee that their kinsmen and flocks would be safe.

v THE THAKIF DEPUTATION

It was the middle of Ramadan when the deputation reached Medina. A tent was erected for them not far from the Mosque and they were treated with Islamic courtesy and hospitality.

NO COMPROMISE IN FAITH AND PRAYER.

When they met the Prophet (sa) they presented their proposal to him, however, they added to their original intention permission for the temple to al lat to remain standing for a further three years. When the Prophet (sa) refused their request they bargained for two years, then one, and downwards until they reached one month, but the matter was completely unacceptable to the Prophet (sa). Having failed at this, they then pleaded with the Prophet (sa) that he should not compel them to destroy their idols but he refused and when they asked permission not to offer the five obligatory daily prayers, the Prophet (sa) replied, "There is no good in a religion that has no obligatory prayer." Eventually the Thakif accepted the terms and reluctantly agreed to abide by them, and Mughirah, the nephew of Urwah, and Abu Sufyan who was in Mecca at that time, was ordered to return with them and destroy the idol of al lat together with its temple.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE OF AL LAT

The deputation from Ta'if entered Islam and joined the Muslims in the remaining days of the fast. At the end of Ramadan, Mughirah, together with his tribesmen set out for Ta'if with the deputation. When they reached Mecca, Abu Sufyan joined them and together they proceeded

to Ta'if. Upon reaching Ta'if, Mughirah destroyed the idol of al lat whilst his tribesmen stood guard in readiness to protect him. However, there was no resistance except for the weeping of some women.

ABU AMIR AND WAHSHI

Amongst the residents of Ta'if were two men who were not from the tribe of Thakif but had sought refuge with them. One was Hanzalah's father, Abu Amir, and the other Wahshi, the former Abyssinian slave who had gained his freedom at Badr when he killed Hamza. Now that Ta'if had surrendered there was nothing else for them to do but leave their haven. Abu Amir fled to Syria where he died, but Wahshi learned from the Thakif that if he embraced Islam, the Prophet (sa) would forgive him and his life would no longer be in jeopardy. Upon hearing this news, he left Ta'if for Medina to embrace Islam. When Wahshi reached Medina he went to the Prophet (sa) to declare his Islam, however, before he could pledge his allegiance one of the companions recognized him and drew the attention of the Prophet (sa) to his presence. In spite of the sad remembrance of Hamza's brutal martyrdom, the Prophet (sa) compassionately welcomed Wahshi and Wahshi embraced Islam. Then he turned to his companion and told him, "Leave him, one man's Islam is dearer to me than the killing of a thousand unbelievers."

SUBTLE RESISTANCE

As one might suspect, there were among those who newly professed Islam, some who had done so with reluctance. One such person was a man named Dirar who set about building his own mosque to attract those of similar inclination to worship there. To hide his hypocrisy Dirar fabricated the excuse that he had built the Mosque for those too ill or weak to attend the prayers at the Prophet's Mosque and had even gone so far as to invite the Prophet (sa), before he left for Tabuk, to pray there so as to consecrate it to Allah. The Prophet (sa) declined and upon his return journey from Tabuk he ordered the mosque to be burned down. Allah speaks of the mosque and hypocrites in the Koran saying:

v "And there are those who have taken a mosque to cause harm, disbelief, and to divide the believers, and as a place of ambush for those who fought Allah and His Messenger before. They swear: 'We desired nothing but good' but Allah bears witness that they are liars. You shall never stand there. A mosque founded upon piety from the first day is worthier for you to stand in. In it are men who love to purify themselves. Allah loves those who purify themselves. Koran 9:107-108

CHAPTER 127 THE YEAR OF DEPUTATIONS

It was now nine years since the Prophet's migration and it wasn't long after the Thakif's surrender that other tribes, from all the corners of Arabia, sent their representatives to Medina; some to embrace Islam, whilst some of the People of the Book preferred to remain as

they were under the protection of the Islamic State. There were so many deputations the year was often referred to as the "Year of Deputations". When a deputation arrived from Yemen, they brought with them letters from Himyarite princes that proclaimed their acceptance of Islam. The news was pleasing to the Prophet (sa) who replied with the best of greetings to the letters and spoke of their new Islamic obligations, and asked them to treat the envoys he would send them well. He also told them, in accordance with the Holy Koran, he would also send his companions to collect the obligatory lunar yearly tax from the Muslims and the poll-tax from the People of the Book with the message they would be protected by Allah and His Messenger (sa).

AMIR, TUFAYL'S SON

v Amir, Tufayl's son had become the chieftain of the tribe of Amir despite his disagreeable personality. It was he, who some time before, had initiated the massacre of the Muslims at Bir Maunah, but now his tribe put pressure on him to go to Medina and tell the Prophet (sa) that they accepted Islam. Amir arrived in Medina full of his own importance and told the Prophet (sa) that in return for his Islam he wanted to be made his successor. The Prophet (sa) politely replied that it was not to be so, neither for himself nor his people. Arrogantly, Amir demanded that if he could not be his successor then he wanted to be the chieftain of the Bedouins, and would leave what he termed "the villagers" to him. The Prophet (sa) refused but told him that he would entrust him with the cavalry, saying, "You are an excellent horseman." Amir took it as an insult and demanded, "Am I to have nothing!" and as he turned to leave he said, "I will fill the land with both cavalry and soldiers against you!" After Amir left, the Prophet (sa) supplicated saying, "O Allah, guide the tribe of Amir, and rid the Islam of Amir, son of Tufayl." Before Amir could reach home, he was stricken by an abscess that began to fester and from which he subsequently died. It did not matter to the tribesmen that Amir's personal demands had not been met, they were set upon an alliance and dispatched a second deputation and all was well.

THE DEPUTATION FROM YAMAMAH

Amongst the many deputations was one from the Christian tribe of Hanifa in Yamamah, whose land bordered the Najd. The Hanifa sent their delegation to Medina to tell the Prophet (sa) of their wish to embrace Islam and they were welcomed with open arms into the fold of Islam.

THE COLLECTION OF THE OBLIGATORY CHARITY AND POLL-TAX

After Ramadan, when the payment of the zakat, or obligatory charity, was due, the Prophet (sa) appointed ibn Al Lutbiyyah from the tribe of Azd to be its collector. Upon his return he entered the Mosque with the obligatory charity, and laid it before the Prophet (sa) saying as he pointed, "I have collected this and this for the obligatory charity." However, referring to some other items he told the Prophet (sa) that they were given to him as gifts.

ADMINISTRATIVE EMBEZZLEMENT

v The Prophet (sa) ascended the pulpit, praised Allah, then said, "I appointed a man from among you to carry out one of the obligations Allah has entrusted to me. He has returned and said, 'This is the zakat, and this has been given to me as a gift.' If he is telling the truth why didn't he stay in his parent's home so that the gifts came to him there? By Allah, if any one of you takes anything of which he has no right, he will meet Allah on the Day of Judgement carrying that thing. Do not let me see any of you meeting Allah carrying a grunting camel, or a mooing cow, or a bleating goat." Then he raised his arms high in supplication saying thrice, "O Allah, I have conveyed Your Command."

THE WARNING

The Prophet (sa) sent Abu Ubadah, Jarrah's son to Bahrain to collect the poll-tax that had become due. He returned to Medina late one night but it was not long before the news of his return became known. The next morning after the prayer some of the Ansar went to the Prophet (sa) and he smiled saying, "I think you have heard that Abu Ubadah has returned from Bahrain with something." Whereupon they replied, "This is so, O Messenger of Allah (sa)." The Prophet (sa) turned to them saying, "Be happy, and hope for that which will please you. It is not your poverty that I fear for you, rather, it is that the world is laid before you as it was to those before you, and you will compete as they competed, then, it will destroy you as it destroyed them."

CHAPTER 128 THE FIRST PILGRIMAGE AFTER THE OPENING OF MECCA

It was just over two months since Eid Al Fitr, and the time for pilgrimage to Mecca was fast approaching. When it was time to leave three hundred pilgrims set out for Medina under the leadership of Abu Bakr, shortly after they had left the Prophet (sa) received another Revelation. The Revelation referred to both believers and unbelievers for Allah had made it known:

"Believers, the idolaters are unclean. Do not let them approach the Sacred Mosque after this year. If you fear poverty, Allah, if He wills, Will enrich you through His bounty. He is Knowing, Wise. Fight those who neither believe in Allah nor the Last Day, who do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden and do not embrace the religion of the truth, being among those who have been given the Book (Bible and the Torah), until they pay tribute out of hand and have been humiliated." Koran 9:28-29

"A proclamation from Allah and His Messenger, to the people on the day of the Greater Pilgrimage: 'Allah rejects, and His Messenger (rejects), the idolaters. So if you repent, that will

be better for you; but if you turn your backs, know that you cannot frustrate Allah. And give good tidings to the unbelievers of a painful punishment, except those idolaters who have fully honored their treaties with you and aided none against you. With these fulfill your covenant till their term. Surely, Allah loves the righteous." Koran 9:3-4

v No sooner had the verses been sent down than the Prophet (sa) sent Ali to ride on to Mecca and make the announcement at Mina. He was also instructed to inform the idolaters making their pilgrimage to the House that nudity was not permissible and that year would be the last time they would be permitted to go there.

IMAM ALI FOLLOWED ABU BAKR’S LEADERSHIP ON HAJJ.

When Ali caught up with the Muslims, Abu Bakr invited him to lead the pilgrims but he declined saying that the leadership of the pilgrimage had been given to him. The pilgrimage was drawing to an end and as the pilgrims prepared to sacrifice their offerings at Mina, Ali recited the Revelation to them. The idolaters were given four months respite to tend to their affairs and it was made known to them that thereafter they would no longer be permitted to enter Mecca and that war could be expected to be waged against them unless they had entered into a treaty with the Prophet (sa) and abided by it. The Revelation also spoke of the unbelievers treatment if they sought refuge with them saying:

"If an idolater seeks asylum with you, give him protection in order that he hears the Word of Allah, and then convey him to his place of safety, because they are a nation who do not know.” Koran 9:6

CHAPTER 129 LIFE IN MEDINA

It was now the tenth year after the Migration and the Prophet (sa) spent the year in Medina. It was a happy time for the Holy family, Abraham had learned to walk and talk, and was a constant source of happiness to the entire family. Hasan and Hussain had a little sister who was named after their aunt, Lady Zaynab, and now their mother was expecting another baby. Abu Bakr's wife had passed away several years before and he had remarried. His new wife's name was the same as his daughter, Asma, and was the sister-in-law of Abbas. They too were also expecting a blessed addition to the family.

THE COMING OF THE CHRISTIANS

As in the previous year, delegations continued to arrive from all over Arabia. The day came when sixty Christians arrived from Najran. At the time of their arrival they were under the rule of the Roman Empire and were accustomed to receive handsome gifts from Heraclius in Constantinople. As usual, the Prophet's guests were made welcome and hospitality lavished upon them.

TOLERANCE

When they said they wished to offer their prayer the Prophet (sa) permitted them to say it in the Mosque, and they prayed in an easterly direction, towards Jerusalem.

THE PEOPLE OF PREVIOUS HOLY BOOKS

The Prophet (sa) and the Christians discussed and compared their religions, and the Christians found that there were many things similar to their own, however, when it came to discussing the position of Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, they disagreed. It was during this time that Allah sent down:

"This, We recite to you of the verses and Wise Remembrance. Truly, the likeness of Jesus with Allah, is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust then He said to him 'Be' and he was. The truth is from your Lord, Therefore, do not be among the doubters. Those who dispute with you concerning him after the knowledge has come to you, say: 'Come, let us gather our sons and your sons, our womenfolk and your womenfolk, ourselves and yourselves. Then let us humbly pray, so lay the curse of Allah upon the ones who lie.' This is indeed the truthful narration. There is no god except Allah. It is Allah who is the Almighty, the Wise. If they turn away, Allah knows the evildoers. Say: 'People of the Book, let us come to a common word between us and you that we will worship none except Allah, that we will associate none with Him, and that none of us take others as lords besides Allah.' If they turn back say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims. People of the Book, why do you dispute about Abraham when both the Torah and the Gospel were not sent down till after him? Have you no sense? Indeed, you have disputed about that which you have knowledge. Why then dispute about that of which you have no knowledge? Allah knows but you do not know. No, Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Nazarene. He was of pure faith, a submitter (Muslim). He was never of the idolaters. Surely, the people who are nearest to Abraham are those who follow him, and this Prophet (Muhammad), and those who believe. Allah is the Guardian of the believers. Some of the People of the Book wish to make you go astray, but they lead none astray except themselves, though they do not sense it. People of the Book! Why do you disbelieve the verses of Allah while you are witness? People of the Book! Why do you confound truth with falsehood, and knowingly hide the truth?" Koran 3:58-71

After the Prophet (sa) finished his recitation he invited the Christian to sit down with him and his family. The Christians said they needed time to think and returned to their quarters. The next day when they returned, they found Ali, Lady Fatima and their two sons were with the Prophet (sa) and knew what he was about to ask them as he covered them with the cloak he was wearing. The Christians declined to take part in invoking the curse of Allah upon those who lie, and asked for a treaty to be drawn up between them. In return for the payment of a tax, they were given the protection of the Islamic State, for not only their persons, but also

their churches and wealth.

LIKENESS IN RELIGIONS

Although the preceding verses begin with a direct challenge to the Christians, they also address the Jews. The verses also speak of religion of Prophet Abraham, of whom both religions claim to follow, as not being an idolater, rather, he was he was a man of pure faith, the worshipper of Allah, alone, the One and only Creator. Upon taking a closer look at the religions of Judaism, Christianity and the pagan religion of the Koraysh, one notices a common thread running between them. The Koraysh worshipped and associated in Al-Lat, Al Manat and Al-Uzza with Allah. The Jews associated and worshipped Ezra, claiming he was the son of Allah. The Christians worshipped and associated Jesus, claiming he was His son. As a point of interest, even up until today, in the Arabic Bible, Christians choose to use the word "Allah", which is the pronoun for the Creator rather than the word "illah" which is Arabic word for God.

v "The Jews say Ezra is the son of Allah, while the Christians say the Messiah is the son of Allah. Such are their assertions, by which they imitate those who disbelieved before. Allah fights them! How perverted they are! They take their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allah, and the Messiah, son of Mary, though they were ordered to worship but One God, there is no god except He. Exalted is He above that they associate with Him!" Koran 9:30-31

The prophets sent to the Jews and the Christians warned their followers not to associate anything or anyone with Allah. Therefore, the Jews and Christians are held more blameworthy than the pagan Koraysh, as the Koraysh had neither received a Book, nor yet Divine Guidance with which to follow. The description of Prophet Muhammad (sa) was known to both Jew and Christian alike, however, the Koran records the fact that they disobediently tampered with their Holy Books thus preventing the truth from becoming known. So it is not surprising, that the Jews, through racial pride and disobedience to Allah, rejected Prophet Muhammad (sa) on account of his not being of their race. Had the Christians been faithful to the book they attributed to Jesus, then, they would, without doubt, accepted the challenge "... then let us humbly pray, so lay curse of Allah upon the ones who lie" but they knew the truth and refused to take the litmus test.

THE JEWISH TAMPERING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AND THE CHRISTIANS WHO FOLLOWED IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS

Prophet Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, he was a man of pure faith, an absolute submitter to his Creator, Allah.

CHAPTER 130 A TIME OF GREAT SORROW

Abraham, the Prophet's son, was very young and had not had enough time to establish an

immune system in his precious little body. With the increase in Medina's population, and the comings and goings of so very many people also came disease. One day Abraham was stricken with an illness from which he was never to recover. Great sadness descended upon Medina when his condition was made known and the Prophet (sa) stayed by his side as often and as long as he could. As Abraham grew weaker, the Prophet (sa) knew it would not be long until the angels took away his darling little soul and with tender, loving care he held him close to him in his arms and tear drops started to fall as Abraham drifted gently away. The Prophet (sa) could not withhold his sadness and wept openly for his son, and as he did Abdur Rahman, Awf's son, who had misunderstood the extent to which one is permitted to weep, was concerned by the Prophet's weeping and gently asked, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), is this what you have forbidden. If the Muslims see you weeping, they too will weep." Tears continued to flow from the Prophet's eyes and when at last he could speak he said, "This kind is not forbidden, these are tears of tenderness and mercy, and he who is not merciful shall be shown no mercy." Then, addressing his son he said, "O Abraham, if it were not for the certainty of reunion, and that this is a path we must all walk, and that the last of us shall overtake the first, indeed, we would grieve for you with even greater sorrow. We are deeply stricken with sorrow for you, the eye weeps and the heart grieves, nor yet are we doing anything which would be offensive before our Lord." Lady Maryam was deeply saddened by the loss of her little son and the Prophet (sa) spoke gently to her with words of reassurance that comforted her as he told her that their son was in Paradise. After a while the Prophet (sa) left and returned with Abbas and Fadl. Fadl washed the tiny, delicate little body and shrouded it whilst the Prophet (sa) and his uncle gazed on in sadness. It was time to lay the little darling to rest and a tiny grave was dug for him in the cemetery. After the funeral prayer had been said, his tiny bier was taken to the cemetery where the Prophet (sa) prayed for him again, and Osama and Fadl lowered him gently into his grave. The Prophet (sa) remained at his graveside after it had been covered with earth and asked for some water to be brought to him, which he then sprinkled over the grave. The earth covering the grave was somewhat uneven whereupon the Prophet (sa) said, "When you do something, do it as perfectly as possible," and smoothed it over with his blessed hand saying, "It does neither harm nor good, but it relieves those whose soul is afflicted." A few days later there was an eclipse of the sun, and people began to attribute it to the Prophet's loss. But the Prophet (sa) told them it was not so saying, "The sun and moon are two signs of Allah. Their light is not dimmed on account of anyone's death. When you see them eclipsed, you should pray until they return."

THE SELLING OF ARMS

To many it seemed that the time of hostilities was over and word spread among throughout the City that jihad had been suspended. Now that Mecca had been restored for the worship of Allah; the Romans no longer appeared to be a threat, and delegations journeyed to Medina in readiness to ally themselves to the Prophet (sa), they thought there was no need to retain their arms so they began to sell them. When the Prophet (sa) learned of their actions he forbade them to disarm saying, "Until after the coming of the anti-Christ a band of my people will not cease to fight for the truth. If you knew what I knew you would laugh but a little and

weep a lot." He continued to warn saying, "No time will come upon you that is not followed by one that is worse." Then, referring to the Jews, Nazarenes and Christians, and the corruption of their adherence to the injunctions entrusted to them by their prophets he warned still further, "Some of you (Muslims) will follow those who went before, span by span, cubit by cubit, until if they went down the hole of a poisonous reptile you would follow after them."

CHAPTER 131 A TIME TO LEARN

Such was the wisdom of the Prophet (sa) that he formed a committee of scribes, who, from the very beginning were instructed to the write down only the chapters and verses of the Koran, which were then stored in Lady Ayesha's apartment. The Koranic text was written upon any media at hand, sometimes upon parchment, at other times upon bones and so on. Prophet Muhammad (sa) was vigilant in reviewing the written text and upon receiving a new verse or chapter he would also instruct his scribes as to its place within the Holy Book and each year the Angel Gabriel would come to the Prophet (sa) and recite it to him.

THE KORANIC SCRIBES

The Koranic scribes were strictly forbidden to write down his prophetic sayings "hadiths", and so through the Prophet's wisdom there has never, ever been any confusion whatsoever as to that which belongs to the text of the Koran and that belonging to his sayings. In addition to the writing down of the Holy Koran, literally thousands of companions learned to recite the entire Holy Koran by heart and taught it to the next generation. If a literate captive was willing to teach ten Muslims how to read and write, the Prophet (sa) decreed that the captive was automatically released after having accomplished his teaching. Even in this secular century one finds many Muslims memorizing the Holy Koran and then teaching it to the next generation. This tradition is indeed a great blessing as one reflects upon the fact that Muslims in this day and age are approximately thirty-five generations away from its revelation.

PROPHETIC SAYINGS - HADITHS

Prophet Muhammad, (sa) never presumed to speak upon religious affairs without first having been informed by the Angel Gabriel, thereby fulfilling the prophecy of Jesus that spoke of a prophet yet to come who would not speak from himself, but only from the Words of Allah. Prophet Muhammad (sa) told his followers that Allah had given him, besides the Holy Koran, two-thirds more in its understanding, which constitute his "hadith". The hadiths, prophetic sayings, were recorded by other companions as well as being committed to memory then transmitted from one pious generation to another with the name of each narrator recorded up until the first narrator who started his narration with the words, "Prophet Muhammad (sa) said". It is that through this method of transmission that we have been blessed today, after the passage of over fourteen hundred years, to have a direct link to the knowledge taught by Prophet Muhammad (sa).

WARNING

It is essential that Islamic knowledge is learned from a pious, knowledgeable shaykh and not someone who professes the flawed, controversial wahabi doctrine or is a self proclaimed "salafi" shaykh. Failure to follow pious, knowledgeable, shaykhs gives rise to serious misunderstandings and interruptions that result in such events as the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Prophet Muhammad (sa) warned his companions that they should be careful from whom they took Islamic knowledge and reminded them that satan, the stoned and cursed was knowledgeable. From this important prophetic saying the companions understood that knowledge, when it falls into unscrupulous, misguided hands, can be manipulated and used to lead from the Straight Path. We must be also be aware that satan, the stoned and cursed, uses his knowledge to pervert and trick people away from the true guidance of Prophet Muhammad (sa), the result is unhappiness in this life and even greater unhappiness in the life of the Hereafter. An example of satan's guile is illustrated in a story Prophet Muhammad (sa) told his companions. One day satan, the stoned and cursed came to Prophet Jesus, peace be upon him, and said, "Say, there is no god except Allah!" Prophet Jesus replied, "You have told the truth, but, I will not say it after you."

EDUCATION

After the dawn and evening prayers had been offered, the Prophet (sa) would, much to the delight of his followers, instruct them upon aspects of their daily lives and elaborate upon the meaning of verses and chapters of the Koran. He would also tell them of the most beautiful Names of Allah, and inform them how they might come closer to Him.

SELECTIONS FROM IMAM NAWAWI'S COLLECTION OF HADITH "THE GARDEN OF THE GOOD PEOPLE" AND OTHER AUTHENTIC REFERENCES

The following are just a taste of the Prophet's hadiths on a few of the many topics he spoke about. For ease of reading the hadiths have been translated in a style familiar to the English reader. For those wishing to read the verbatim accounts of the hadiths we refer them to the Arabic edition of the references of Bukhari and Muslim as well as that of the great work of Imam Nawawi, which is more suitable for the masses than the references of Bukhari and Muslim.

KNOWLEDGE AND GUIDANCE

One day the Prophet (sa) spoke to his companions concerning the guidance and knowledge he had been given and its effect saying, "It can be compared to rain that which falls upon the land. Part of the land is good and fertile; the dry herbage turns green and a considerable amount of fresh herbage is produced. Another part is dry but stores water and with it Allah

benefits people; they drink from it and use it to cultivate. Another piece of land is barren, a waste-land which neither retains water nor produces fresh herbage. Such are the cases of those who understand the religion sent down by Allah and benefit from that which Allah has sent to me, studying and teaching it. There are those who do not raise their heads to gain religious knowledge, nor do they accept the guidance with which I have been sent."

THE MERCY OF ALLAH

The Prophet (sa) told his companions, "When Allah created His creation, He wrote in a Book which is with Him above the Throne: 'My Mercy surpasses My Anger." He also told them, "With Allah are a hundred (degrees) of mercy. He gave one of these (degrees) to the jinn, humans, animals, and insects which they use among species as kindness. With it the savage beast is kind to its young. The remaining ninety-nine (degrees) Allah reserves for Himself to bestow upon His worshipers on the Day of Resurrection." Allah told His Messenger (sa) to say, "Say to My worshipers who wasted a lot upon themselves: 'Do not be disappointed in the Mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins, He is indeed, All-forgiving, All-merciful."

THE REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH

Abu Hurayrah heard the Prophet (sa) tell his companions, "With Allah are groups of angels that circulate in the streets searching for people remembering Allah. When they find those people remembering Allah, the Most Exalted, they call to one another saying, 'Come to what you want!' and cover them with their wings up to the sky." Then they return to their Lord who asks -- and He is the Most Knowledgeable. 'What were My worshipers saying?' They report. 'They were pronouncing Your exaltations, magnifying, praising and glorifying You.' Then, He, Allah, the Most High inquires, 'Have they seen Me?' And they answer, 'By Allah, no, they have not seen You.' Then Allah the Exalted inquires, 'What if they saw Me?' They answer, 'If they saw You they would be more diligent in Your worship and Your Exaltation and in proclaiming Your Holiness.' Then He, the Mighty, the Glorified inquires, 'What do they ask of Me.' They answer. 'They ask of You Paradise.' Allah inquires, 'Have they seen it?' They answer, 'By Allah, no, they have not seen it.' Then Allah inquires, 'What if they saw it.' They answer, 'If they saw it they would desire it more and seek its yearning more.' Then Allah inquires, 'From what do they seek protection?' They answer, 'They seek protection from the Fire.' And He inquires, 'Have they seen it?' They answer, 'No, by Allah, they have not seen it.' Allah inquires, 'What if they saw it?' The angels answer, 'If they saw it they would run from it more often and fear it more.' Then Allah says, 'I call you to witness that I forgive them.' One of the angels then says, 'Among them was so and so, he is not one of them. He came to You for some purpose of his own.' Then Allah says, 'They were sitting together, therefore, even their associate will not go unrewarded.'"

CLOSENESS TO ALLAH

The Prophet (sa) also told his companions that Allah said, "Whosoever comes close to Me by the span of a hand, I come close to him by an arms length, and whosoever comes close to Me by an arm, I come close to him by a mile. And, whosoever comes to Me walking, I come to him with haste. Whosoever meets Me with the earth full of sins, while he does not associate anything with Me, I will meet him with the like of it of forgiveness."

THE FORGIVENESS OF ALLAH

He also said, "Indeed, Allah brings the believer close, covers and conceals him from people and lets him admit his sins. He says, 'Do you know such sin, do you know such sin?' He replies, 'Yes, my Lord, until he has admitted all his sins, and sees himself as being lost. Then, Allah says, 'I have covered them in the world, and I have forgiven them you this day. Then he is given his Book of Merit in his right hand. As for the unbeliever and the hypocrite, all the witnesses say, 'Indeed those who lied about their Lord, isn't the curse of Allah upon the harmdoers?"

SCIENTIFIC FACTS FOR CENTURIES STILL TO COME

With the knowledge given to him, Prophet Muhammad (sa) spoke upon many scientific topics which were completely unknown during his time and lay undiscovered for many centuries after he passed away. This knowledge was given to him by Allah to serve as proof of his prophethood to those in our own era and beyond. It was absolutely impossible for even the most learned people of his time to have knowledge of such things.

Allah tells us: "He creates you in your mothers′ womb, creation after creation, in three (stages of) darkness." Koran 39:6

This verse refers to the three amniotic sacks of fluid surrounding the fetus. One day, as ibn Masood relates, the Prophet (sa) expounded the mystery of the growth of the fetus in the womb saying, "For each and every one of you, his creation is determined when he is in his mother's womb. Forty days as a drop, then it becomes a clot for the same (number of days). After, it becomes like a chewed (piece of flesh) for the same (number of days), then an angel is sent who breathes into it its soul, then he is ordered with four words; his provision, life span, deeds and whether or not he is unfortunate or happy." It was only in recent centuries that physicians learned of the progress of the fetus within the womb and the duration of each stage as well as the discovery of the three surrounding amniotic sacks of fluid. Another scientific example is that of the fly. The Prophet (sa) told his companions that under each of its two wings is a sack of fluid; under one there is a poison, and under the other is its antidote. This scientific fact was only discovered last century.

THE IMPORTANTANCE OF ONE'S INTENTION

Omar heard Prophet Muhammad (sa) telling his companions of the importance of one's intention. He said, "Indeed, deeds are (judged) by the intention, and there is for everyone that which he intended. If one's migration is to Allah and His Messenger (sa), then one's migration is to Allah and His Messenger (sa). If one's migration is to seek the world, then one's migration is for that. If a man migrates for the sake of a woman and marries her, then his migration is for that which he migrated."

EXALTING ALLAH

The companions always vied with one another in good deeds with the knowledge that they would be well rewarded in the Hereafter, however, the poor among them were unable to spend very much in the cause of Allah and this concerned them so they went to the Prophet (sa) saying, "The wealthy will achieve higher ranks and lasting bounties," whereupon the Prophet (sa) asked what caused them to say this. They answered, "They pray as we do and keep the fast as we do, but they spend in charity whereas we are unable, and they free those in their care whereas we are unable." The Prophet (sa) told them, "Shall I inform you of something whereby you will surpass those who are ahead of you and keep you ahead of those who are behind you, and no one will surpass you unless he does what you do?" Anxiously the companions replied, "Indeed, O Messenger of Allah (sa)!" So he told them, "Say 'Subhan-Allah, thirty-three times, Al Hamdu-lillah, thirty-three times and Allahu Akbar thirty-three times after each prayer."

(Subhan-Allah means exalted is Allah Al Hamdu-lillah means praise be to Allah Allahu-Akbar means Allah is the Greatest.)

Not long after the companions returned to the Prophet (sa) saying, "Our wealthy brethren have heard what we are doing and now do the same." "That is the Favor of Allah, He gives it to whomsoever He wills," replied the Prophet (sa).

FOUR KINDS OF PEOPLE

On another occasion the Prophet (sa) informed his companions that the world has four kinds of people.
The first is the person whom Allah has favored with wealth and knowledge and is mindful of his duty to his Lord with them. He strengthens the ties of kinship and acknowledges the rights of Allah in them. Such person is in the best position.
The second is the person whom Allah has favored with knowledge but not wealth, and is sincere then says, "Had I possessed wealth I would have done the same as the first." His reward will be the same as the other.
The third is the person whom Allah has favored with wealth but not knowledge, and squanders his wealth in ignorance. This person is the one who is not mindful of his duty to his Lord in respect of the favors he receives, and neither discharges his obligations of family ties,

nor yet observes the rights of Allah in it. Such person is in the worst position.
The fourth is the person whom Allah has neither favored with wealth nor knowledge, and says, "If I possessed wealth I would have been like that person." This is his intention - they are both equal in sinfulness.

WHEN DEEDS ARE NOT FOR ALLAH

Abu Hurayrah heard the Prophet (sa) tell his companions, "One of the first men to be judged on the Day of Judgement will be one who was martyred. He will be summoned and shown all the bounties which were bestowed upon him. He will recognize them and then asked, 'How did you use them?" He will reply, 'I fought in Your Cause and was martyred.' Then he will be told, 'You lie. You fought so that you might be called a champion, and as such you were known.' Judgement will be passed on him and he will be dragged on his face and thrown into the Fire. Then a man will be brought who acquired knowledge and studied the Koran. Likewise, he will be shown the bounties bestowed upon him and will recognize them and will be asked, 'How did you use them?' He will reply: 'I acquired knowledge, taught it and studied the Koran to win Your pleasure.' Whereupon he will be told, 'You lie. You acquired knowledge so that you might be called a wise person, a reciter of the Koran so that you might be called a Qari, and accordingly you were given that title.' Judgement will be passed on him and he will be dragged on his face and thrown into the Fire. A man will be brought forward on whom Allah bestowed plenty and every kind of wealth. He too will be shown the bounties bestowed on him and will recognize them then asked, 'How did you use them?' He will reply, 'I spent upon every one of the causes You approve of and left none in order to win Your pleasure.' Then he will be told, 'You lie, you did all that so that you might be called charitable, and accordingly you were known as such.' Judgement will be passed upon him and he will be dragged on his face and thrown into the Fire.

THE SUPPLICATIONS OF THE PROPHET

The Prophet (sa) was often asked how to supplicate to Allah, and as such he taught his followers many supplications for different circumstances. One day Abu Umamah, who was deeply troubled, came to the Prophet (sa) saying that he was unable to remember all the different supplications so the Prophet (sa) asked, "Shall I tell you something which is the total of all of them? Supplicate: 'O Allah, I beseech You for all the good that Your Prophet Muhammad (sa) has beseeched of You, and I seek Your Protection from all the evil against which Your Prophet Muhammad (sa) has sought of You. You are the One to rely upon, and from You is sent. There is no might nor power except through Allah.'"

PARADISE AND HELL

Allah has promised that as long as a person believes that Allah is One and has no partners and that Muhammad is His Prophet and Messenger and believe in all His prophets and messengers

they will be saved from the Fire of Hell. Believers that commit punishable major sins such as adultery will be punished unless Allah in His Mercy forgives him/her. In the case of murder Allah may forgive the murderer if the murdered person forgives his/her murderer. Believers subjected to Hell will however be released, after a very long period of time, on account of their belief, whereas unbelievers will remain in Hell for all eternity. As for those that believed and committed suicide, suicide is a state of disbelief and as such they die as an unbeliever.

THE INHABITANTS OF PARADISE

One day the Prophet (sa) told his companions, "When the inhabitants of Paradise enter a herald will announce, 'You will live forever and will not die. You will be in good health and never become ill. You will be young and never grow old and you will be in comfort and never encounter discomfort.'"

HOW TO GET TO PARADISE

Ubadah, Samit's son heard the Prophet (sa) say, "Whosoever bears witness that there is no god except Allah, the One, without an associate, that Muhammad is His worshipper and Messenger, that Jesus is the worshiper and Messenger of Allah, and His Word (Be) that He conveyed to Mary and a spirit from Him, that Paradise is a truth, that the Fire is a truth, will be admitted by Allah to Paradise no matter what he did."

PARADISE AND HELL

Anas recorded that during one of the Prophet's sermons he heard him say, "If you knew what I know, you would laugh a little and weep a lot, whereupon the congregation covered their faces and sobbed. The Prophet (sa) continued, "Paradise and Hell have been shown to me. I have never seen anything so good or so evil like them until this day."

THE PROPHETS AND THEIR NATIONS

Ibn Abbas related that one day the Prophet (sa) told his companions that a prophet had been shown to him in a vision who had only a small group of people with him. Then he was shown other prophets some of whom had just one or two followers, whereas others had none at all. Then, suddenly he saw a huge assembly and thought it was his nation, but he was informed, "This is Moses and his nation; look at the horizon." He looked and saw a great multitude, then he was told to look at the other horizon and there also was a great multitude, whereupon he was told, "These are your nation. From them seventy thousand will enter Paradise without being taken to account or suffering." Thereafter the Prophet (sa) went to his room and the companions began to speculate about those who would enter Paradise without account or suffering. Some said, "Perhaps they are his companions," others said, "May be they are the ones who were born Muslims and never associated anyone with Allah," and so forth. Then the

Prophet (sa) returned and asked them what they were discussing so they told him. He replied, "They are those who neither made charms, nor amulets, nor did they desire them. They did not believe in omens but trusted their Lord." Then Ukasha, Mohsin's son stood up and requested, "Supplicate to Allah that He makes me one of them." The Prophet (sa) replied, "You are one of them." Then another stood up and asked the same, but the Prophet (sa) answered, "Ukasha has beaten you to it, the supplication has been made."

THE COMPANIONSHIP OF THE PROPHET (sa) IN PARADISE

One day, Rabia, Ka'b Aslami's son, who attended the Prophet (sa) and prepared the water for his ablutions, was asked by the Prophet (sa), "Would you like to ask for something?" Rabia replied, "I would like to ask for your companionship in Paradise." Then the Prophet (sa) inquired, "Is there anything else?" whereupon he replied, "No, that is all." Then the Prophet (sa) told him, "Then help me by increasing the number of your prostrations."

THE REWARD OF A SIMPLE GESTURE

The Prophet (sa) told his companions that he had seen a man who would enter Paradise because he cut down a tree from the side of a road just because it was harmful to Muslims. Allah was thankful for his gesture and forgave him his sins.

RANKS IN PARADISE

On another occasion, Mughirah, Shubah's son heard the Prophet (sa) telling his companions, "Prophet Moses asked his Lord, 'Who will be in the lowest rank in Paradise?' He was informed, 'It will be a man who will arrive when the all the dwellers of Paradise have entered Paradise and it will be said to him, 'Enter Paradise.' But he will ask, 'How can I enter, Lord, when everyone has settled in his place and taken his gifts?' Whereupon he will be asked, 'Will you be satisfied if you had a kingdom like the kingdoms of the monarchs of the world?' He will reply, 'I will be content O Lord.' Then he will be told, 'You have such and its like, and its like, and its like.' At the mention of the fifth time he will say, 'O Lord, I am content,' and will be told: 'That is for you and ten times as much again. You will have whatever your soul desires and whatever delights your eyes.' And he will say again, 'O Lord, I am satisfied!' Then Moses asked, 'Who will have the highest rank in Paradise?' Allah said, 'Those will be the ones whom I exalted with My Own Hands and whose rank I shall attest with My Seal. No eye has seen, no ear has heard and the mind of no man has ever conceived their rank.'"

DWELLING PLACES IN PARADISE

Regarding the houses in Paradise the Prophet (sa) told his companions, "A believer will have a tent in Paradise hollowed out from a pearl. Its height will stretch for seventy miles into the heaven. The believer will have his family with him, and he will go about in it and not one of

them will see the other."

THE DWELLERS OF PARADISE

At another time he told his companions, "The dwellers of Paradise will look at the mansion of those above them as you gaze at the bright, distant planets upon the eastern and western horizons. Such will be the differences in their ranks." When he was asked if the mansions would be those of the Prophets that no one else would be able to reach he replied, "Yes, but by Him in whose Hands is my soul, there will also be those who believed in Allah and did not belie His Messengers."

A VISION OF THE PROPHET (SA)

Samurah, Jundab's son was among the companions when the Prophet (sa) said, "Last night two people came to me in a vision and said, 'Come with us.' So I accompanied them and we came across a man lying on his back whilst another stood near his head striking it with a stone. No sooner had the stone struck the person on his head with the stone than it rolled away from him and the striker went after it, picked it up and returned with it. In the meantime the head of the person that had been struck recovered from his injury and the striker hit him again. I asked my two companions, 'Exalted is Allah, who is this?' But they said, 'Proceed, proceed.' Then we came to another man lying on his back whilst another stood near him with a hooked bar of iron in his hand. He approached him from one side, ripped open his mouth right down to his neck, then he ripped open his nostril down to his neck and gouged out his eye down to his neck. Then he turned to his other side and did the same by which time the first side of the man's face had recovered from its injuries and the punisher returned to the other side and repeated what he had done before. I asked my companions, 'Exalted is Allah, what are these two doing?' But they said, 'Proceed, proceed.' Then we went on and arrived near a pit that was like an oven out of which came cries. We glanced into it and saw naked men and women who cried out as the flames from below reached them. I asked my companions, 'Exalted is Allah, who are these?' But they said, 'Proceed, proceed.' Then we proceeded until we arrived at a stream, the water of which was red like blood, and in it there was a man, swimming. On the bank of the stream was another who had gathered many rocks. When the swimmer approached him, he would strike him with a rock that would smash his face and he would start swimming again, and as he approached the bank once more the man on the bank struck him again and smashed his face. I asked my companions, 'Exalted is Allah, who are these two?' But they replied, 'Proceed, proceed.' So we proceeded until we reached a Garden that was full of spring flowers and in its middle was such a tall man that I was unable to see his head, it was as if it was hidden in the sky. Around him were so many children, the number of which I have never seen before. I asked my companions, 'Exalted is Allah, who are these?' But they said, "Proceed, proceed.' After this we arrived at a tree that was so enormous, I have never seen any so big, nor yet so beautiful, and my companions asked me to climb it. We all climbed up and saw a city built from alternate blocks of gold and silver. When we reached the gate of the city we asked for the gate to be opened and it was, so we

entered. In it we saw people, half of their bodies were the most beautiful bodies you could ever imagine, yet their other half was the most ugly. There was a stream flowing through the middle of the city, its water was pure white. My companions said to the people, "Go plunge into the stream." So they did, when they came out their ugliness had vanished and they had became very beautiful. My two companions then told me, 'This is the Garden of Eden and that is your residence.' I raised my eyes and saw a palace like a white cloud and they repeated, 'This is your residence.' I said to them, 'May Allah bless you both, now let me enter.' But they said, 'Not just yet, but without doubt you will indeed enter it.' Then I said to my companions, 'Tonight I witnessed many strange things. What are their meanings.' They replied, 'We will tell you now. The first person you saw whose head was being struck with a stone was the one who committed the Koran to memory, then forgotten it and neglected the obligatory prayers. The person whose mouth, nostrils and eyes were being ripped open to the neck was one who ran from his home spreading lies which then circulated throughout the world. As for the men and women in the oven they were adulterers and adulteresses. The man you saw swimming in the stream being stoned was one who earned interest (usury) on his money, and the ugly person near the fire was Malik, the Guardian of Hell. The very tall man in the Garden was Abraham and the children around him were those who died upright.' At this point a companion of the Messenger of Allah (sa) asked, 'O Messenger of Allah (sa), were any of the children, the children of unbelievers?' He replied, 'Yes, and the children of unbelievers. Those who were half beautiful and half ugly were people who had done both good and bad deeds, and Allah pardoned them.'"

THE DEPTHS OF HELL - A FALLING DISTANCE OF SEVENTY LIGHT YEARS

One day when the companions were with the Prophet (sa) he heard the sound of something heavy crash and asked, "Do you know what that was?" To which they replied, "Allah, and His Messenger (sa) know best." "That was a stone that had been thrown into Hell seventy years ago," he replied, "it kept falling until that moment. It reached the bottom of Hell just now and the sound you heard was when it hit the bottom."

THE LEAST PUNISHMENT IN HELL

Numan, Bashir's son heard Prophet Muhammad (sa) say, "The one who is least punished amongst the inhabitants of the Fire will be the one who has two brands of fire under his feet and his brain boils. He will imagine himself to be the most punished person, yet, he will be the least punished among them."

A DEED THAT WILL LET YOU ENTER PARADISE

Muaz asked the Messenger of Allah (sa), "O Messenger of Allah (sa), tell me of a deed which will cause me to enter Paradise and keep me away from the Fire." He answered, "You have asked me about a very weighty matter, but it is easy for one whom Allah makes it easy.

Worship Allah but associate nothing with Him. Offer the prayer, pay the obligatory charity, fast the month of Ramadan and make the pilgrimage to the House." Then he asked, "Shall I inform you of the Gates of Goodness? Fasting is a shield, charity lightens sins as water extinguishes a fire. Similarly, prayer in the middle of the night." Then he recited:

"Whose sides forsake their couches as they supplicate to their Lord in fear and hope; who give in charity of that which We have given them. No soul knows what pleases the eye is in store for them as a recompense for what they used to do." Koran 32:16-17

He continued, "Shall I tell you of the head of the matter and of its pole, and its highest hump?' Muaz replied, 'Certainly, O Messenger of Allah (sa).' The head of the matter is Islam, its pole are prayers and its highest hump is Jihad in the Cause of Allah," he replied. Then he asked, "Shall I tell you of that which is the owner of all this." Muaz replied, 'Certainly, O Messenger of Allah (sa).' Whereupon he took hold of his tongue and said, "Keep this under control." Then Muaz inquired, 'O Messenger of Allah (sa), shall we be called to account in respect of what we say?' "May your mother lose you, people will be thrown face downwards into Hell only because of the harvest of their tongue!" he replied.

THE ENCOMPASSING MERCY OF ALLAH

Some captives were brought before the Prophet (sa) and a women ran frantically in search of her infant. When she found her infant she picked it up, hugged and suckled it. The Prophet (sa) told his companions, "Could you imagine this woman throwing her child into the Fire?" "Indeed no," replied his companions. Whereupon the Prophet (sa) said, "Allah is more merciful towards His worshippers than a mother is to her child."

THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

The Messenger of Allah (sa) was invited to a meal in which Abu Hurayrah was present and reported that during the meal he spoke of the Day of Resurrection saying, "I will be the Master of all people on the Day of Resurrection. Do you know how?" He continued, "On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will assemble all mankind, the first and the last, on a wide plain so that they will all be visible and able to hear the caller. On that Day the sun will be brought very near to mankind and they will undergo tremendous suffering and grief, and say among themselves, 'Do you realize what we are in, and what has befallen us? Can you find someone who might intercede for you with your Lord?' Some will say to the other, 'Adam is your father,' and they will go to him and say, 'O Adam, you are the father of mankind, Allah created you with His own Hands and breathed into you His spirit and commanded the angels to prostrate towards you and let you live in the Garden. Won't you intercede for us with your Lord? Don't you see our condition and the immense suffering that has overtaken us?' Adam will say, 'My Lord is angry today in a way in which He has never been angered before, and He will never be angered like it again. He forbade me to eat from a certain tree but I disobeyed Him. I am

afraid for myself, for myself, for myself. Go to someone else, go to Noah.' So they will go to Noah and say, 'O Noah, you were the first Messenger to the people of the world and Allah called you a grateful worshipper. Look at our condition, see how we suffer! Won't you intercede for us with your Lord?' He will tell them, 'My Lord is angry today in a way in which He has never been angered before, and He will never be angered like it again. I was given one chance to supplicate and I supplicated against my people. I am afraid for myself for myself, for myself. Go to someone else, go to Abraham.' So they will go to Abraham and say, 'O Abraham, you are the Prophet of Allah, His friend, chosen from the inhabitants of the earth, please intercede for us with your Lord. You can see the predicament we are in!' Abraham will tell them, 'My Lord is angry today in a way in which He has never been angered before, and He will never be angered like it again. I lied three times (this refers to his mocking response to the unbelievers after he destroyed the statues). Myself, myself, myself, therefore go to someone else, go to Moses.' So they will go to Moses and say, 'O Moses, you are the Messenger of Allah, Allah honored you and favored you with His Message and His Speech above the people, please intercede for us with your Lord! Don't you see our condition?' He will say, 'My Lord is angry today, in a way in which He has never been angered before. I killed a person whom I had not been ordered to kill. I am afraid for myself, for myself for myself, go to someone else, go to Jesus.' So they will go to Jesus and say to him, 'Jesus, you are the Messenger of Allah and His Word which He conveyed to Mary and a spirit from Him and you talked to people when you were in your cradle, intercede for us with your Lord -- look at our circumstances!' Jesus will reply, 'My Lord is angry today, in a way in which He has never been angered before.' He did not mention his sin but said, 'I am afraid for myself, for myself, for myself, go to someone else, go to Muhammad.' Then they will come to me and say, 'O Muhammad, you are the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets. Allah has forgiven you all your shortcomings, the first and the last, intercede for us with your Lord. Look at the condition we are in!' Then I will proceed towards the Throne and fall prostrate before my Lord, then Allah will give me knowledge of His Praise and Exaltation, the like of which has never been given to any before me. Then, He will say to me, ' O Muhammad, raise your head and supplicate, you will be given, intercede and your intercession will be accepted.' Whereupon I will raise my head and supplicate, 'My nation, O Lord, my nation. O Lord, my nation, O Lord.' And Allah will say, 'O Muhammad, take into Paradise through its Gate those on the right, those who are not subject to the accounting; the remainder will be admitted along with other people through the various gates of Paradise.'" Then the Messenger of Allah (sa) added, "By Him in whose Hands is my life, the distance between two gates of Paradise will be as wide as the distance between Mecca and Hijr, or between Mecca, and Basra, Iraq."

THOSE WHO ENCOURAGE GOOD BUT NOT DO IT THEMSELF

Osama, Zayd's son heard the Prophet (sa) say, "On the Day of Judgement there will be a man brought forward and thrown into the Fire. His intestines will burst from his belly and he will clutch them as he goes round in circles, like a donkey treading a mill. The companions of the Fire will gather around him and say, 'What is this? Didn't you encourage good and forbid evil?' He will reply, 'That is so, I encouraged good, but did not do it, whereas I forbade evil but did

it.'"

DEFINITION OF A PAUPER

Abu Hurayrah heard the Prophet (sa) say, "Do you know who is a pauper?" His companions replied, "A pauper is one who has nothing, neither money nor property." The Prophet (sa) explained, "The pauper among my nation is one who comes on the Day of Judgement with a good record of prayer, fasting and charity but has abused someone, slandered, stolen the possessions of another, killed or beaten someone. Those who were oppressed will each receive a portion of his good deeds. If his good deeds are insufficient, then their sins will be transferred from them to him, and he will be thrown into the Fire."

SEEK REFUGE WITH ALLAH FROM FOUR THINGS

The Prophet (sa) urged his companions saying, "At the end of your prayer after you have performed the witnessing supplication, you should seek the refuge of Allah from four things by saying, 'O Allah, I seek Your protection from the punishment of Hell, from the punishment of the grave, from the trials of life and death, and from the mischief and trials of the anti-Christ."

THE COMING OF AL MAHDI, JESUS AND THE ANTI-CHRIST

Prophet Muhammad, (sa) was frequently asked about the affairs preceding the end of the world and told his companions that before the return of Prophet Jesus, Muslims would find themselves in grievous circumstances. However, Allah will not forsake them and will send them a leader to relieve them from their terrible predicament. He told them that his name would be the same as his name -- Muhammad, son of Abdullah -- and that he would be his descendant, then referred to him as Al Mahdi, the Guided Leader. The Prophet (sa) also told his companions that Al Mahdi's time would not come until after the moon had eclipsed on the first night of Ramadan followed by the eclipse of the sun during the middle of the month. Speaking of these unusual happenings, the Prophet (sa) said, "And this has never happened before since Allah created the heavens and the earth." Concerning this advent, it has been reported by ibn Sirin that the Prophet (sa) said, "For the people who make the pilgrimage and stand on Arafat without an Imam, a burning desire will come while they are at Minan. The tribes will revolt against each other until their blood flows on Al Aqabah. Then, the best of them will go when they raise the alarm, and they will reach him (Al Mahdi) as his face touches the stone of Ka'ba -- and it appears to me as if he is tearful -- and they will say to him, 'Come to us so that we can give you our allegiance.' But he will reply, "Woe to you, how many promises did you break, and how much blood did you shed!" And he will be pressured to accept their allegiance -- indeed, he is Al Mahdi, (the Guided One) in the earth and Al Mahdi in the heavens."

JESUS, THE MA-S-EE-H VERSUS THE JEWISH MA-S-EE-KH

"Ma-s-ee-h" is the Arabic unique title given to Jesus, the Messiah. "Ma-s-ee-kh" is the unique Arabic title given to the lying, false messiah, the anti-Christ. The Jewish people await the coming of the 'Jewish Messiah' and refer to him in Hebrew as the 'Moshiakh'. Those familiar with the Arabic language will no doubt recall that the Arabic letter 's' is equal to the Hebrew letter 'sh' as in the word sa-la-m and sha-lo-m, both of which mean peace. Through these examples the reader will easily recognize that the Arabic word 'Ma-s-ee-kh' and the Hebrew word 'Mo-sh-ia-kh' are in fact the same word in these two Semitic languages. Therefore it is apparent that the rabbis not only withhold the signs of Prophet Muhammad (sa), the end of the world, the truth about the virgin Mary and the Prophet of Allah, Jesus, the Messiah and await the coming of the false messiah. We recommend you to read Nawawi's "Gardens of Righteousness" and "Jesus, Al Mahdi and the Anti-Christ" translated from the work of Shaykh Abdullah ben Sadek, the late Grand Muhaddith of Morocco, may Allah have mercy upon him, by Shaykh Ahmad Darwish to learn more about the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (sa) as well as the events preceding the end of the world.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE FALSE MESSIAH

It is during Al Mahdi's leadership that the false-Messiah will appear of whom the Prophet (sa) said, "I caution you about the false-Messiah, and I warn you about him as every Prophet warned his nation. He will come during the time of this nation. I will describe some of his features which other prophets never told their nation. He is one-eyed, and Allah is not one-eyed. Between his eyes is written 'Kafir' (meaning unbeliever) which is read by every believer whether he writes or not." The Prophet (sa) continued, "The majority of those who follow him will be Jews, women and Bedouins. The heavens will appear to rain when it does not rain and the ground planted when it is not planted, and he will say to the Bedouins, 'What do you want from me -- haven't I sent the rain of heaven upon you continuously?'" One morning as Nawwas, Saman's son recalled, the Prophet (sa) spoke to them of the coming of the anti-Christ -- the false messiah -- whereupon his companions became so alarmed they thought he might already be present in a nearby date-palm grove and were very apprehensive. Later, when the Prophet (sa) noticed their unease he asked, "What is troubling you?," whereupon they told him of their concern. The Prophet (sa) replied that it was not that which he feared for them, and told them that if he appeared whilst he was among them, he would be their defender. However, he warned that if he appeared after he was no longer with them they must defend themselves and added, "Allah will be the guardian of every Muslim in my place." Then, the Prophet (sa) elaborated more upon the features of the false-Messiah saying, "He is a young man with coarse hair and has an eye that floats like a grape," then described him as looking similar to Katan's son, Abdul Uzza. The Prophet (sa) told his attentive audience that whosoever encounters the false-Messiah should recite to him, for protection, the opening ten verses of the chapter "Al-Kahf" -- Chapter 18, "The Cave.

In the Name of Allah, The Merciful, the Most Merciful. Praise belongs to Allah who has sent down the Book to His worshiper (Prophet Muhammad and has not made any crookedness in it,

unswerving. To warn of great violence from Him, and to give good tidings to the believers who do good deeds that theirs shall be a goodly wage and they will live for ever therein. And it (the Koran) warns those who say: 'Allah has taken a son.' Surely, of this they have no knowledge, neither they nor their fathers; it is a monstrous word that comes from their mouths, they say nothing but a lie. yet perchance, if they do not believe in this tiding, you will consume yourself with grief and follow after them. We have appointed all that is on the earth an adornment for it, in order that We try which of them is finest in works. We will surely reduce all that is on it to barren dust. Or, do you think the companions of the Cave and the tomb stone were a wonder among Our signs? When the youths sought refuge in the Cave, they said: 'Lord give us from Your Mercy and furnish us with rectitude in our affair.'" Koran 18:10

His companions asked how long the false messiah would remain on earth to which he replied, "Forty days. One of his days will be like a year, one will be like a month, one will be like a week and the rest of his days will be like yours." The companions inquired, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), on the day which will be like a year, will it suffice us to observe the prayers of one day?" He answered, "No, you will have to estimate the passage of time." Then his companions asked about the speed of the anti-Christ's movements, and the Prophet (sa) replied, "It will be like a cloud left behind by the wind." The Prophet continued, "He will approach people, inviting them to him and they will believe him. He will command the sky and it will send down rain on the people. He will command the earth and it will produce green herbage for them; livestock will return in the evening with firm humps, full udders, and fattened sides. Then he will come to another people and invite them to obey him, but they will reject his call and he will turn away from them so that they become stricken by drought and famine, then become destitute." The Prophet (sa) continued to warn his followers saying, "He will pass through deserted places and call on them to bring forth their treasures, and their treasures will follow him like wasps. He will call a man in the prime of his youth and strike him with a (magical) sword so that he is severed in two. The pieces will be separated from each other, the distance of an arrow's shot, then he will summon him and the youth will respond coming with a cheerful smile upon his face. During this period, Allah, the Exalted, will send the Messiah, the son of Mary, who will descend near a white minaret to the East of Damascus, wearing two dyed garments of yellow; his hands resting upon the wings of two angels. As he bows his head, droplets of water will fall from it and when he raises it there will be drops like pearls falling from it. Any unbeliever who experiences the fragrance of his breath will die, and his breathe will reach as far as the extent of his sight. He will pursue the anti-Christ and find him at the Gate of Lud where he will slay him. After this, Jesus (will join forces with Al Mahdi and) come to the people whom Allah has shielded from the anti-Christ. He will wipe away the dust from their faces and inform them of their ranks in Paradise. At that time, Allah, the High will reveal to Jesus, "I have brought out some of My worshipers with whom no one is able to withstand. Therefore lead these, My worshipers, to Mount Tur (Sinai)." Then Allah will raise Gog and Magog and they will be let loose and slide down out of every slope. Their advance groups will pass over Lake Tabariah and consume all its water, and when its rear group pass near it they will say, 'At one time there was water here.' Jesus, Prophet of Allah, peace be upon him, and his companions will be besieged until a bull's head will appear better to them than a hundred dinars appear to you

today. Then Jesus, the Messiah and Prophet of Allah together with his companions will supplicate to Allah, the Exalted and He will create worms in the necks of the people of Gog and Magog which will cause them all to die in the morning like the prey of lions. After this, Jesus, the Prophet of Allah and his companions will descend from the Mount but will not find even the space of the span of a hand free among the corpses of the adherents of Gog and Magog -- and the stench! Jesus and his companions will supplicate again to Allah, and He will send birds, as large as the necks of camels to carry away the corpses and drop them wherever Allah wills. After this, Allah, the Mighty, the Glorified, will send down rain whereby every dwelling, no matter whether it is constructed from clay or hair, will be cleansed and become like a mirror. Then, the earth will be commanded to produce its fruits and to return its blessings, so much that a group of people will be sufficed by sharing a single pomegranate, and shelter will be found under the shade of its peel. Allah will bless the milk of a camel that has just given birth so that it will be enough to suffice a host of people; a cow will suffice a tribe, and the milk of a goat will suffice a branch of a tribe. As they remain in this state of affairs, Allah, the High, will send a pure breeze which will take the Muslims under their armpits whereby the soul of every believer and every Muslim will pass away. After this, only the worst people will be left, who copulate with women openly, unabashed like donkeys -- its is on such people that the Hour will commence." There are several other hadiths relating to this subject in Imam Nawawi's reference.

A WARNING FOR PRESENT DAY MUSLIMS, THE HORN OF THE DEVIL - WAHABISAM

Muslims from different parts of Arabia traveled to Medina to ask the Prophet (sa) to supplicate for blessings upon them and their tribes. One day when the Prophet (sa) was asked to supplicate for blessings upon the Najd, his facial expression changed immediately as he declined saying, "The horn of the devil will appear from the Najd." This was indeed a very grave, serious prophetic warning. Since the time of the Prophet (sa) nothing has ever emerged from the Najd, except the advent of the prophesied Wahabi cult. The Najd remains barren and is even devoid of oil. The founder of the flourishing, evil cult was a man named Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahaab who was born in a place called Uyaynah in the Najd. The doctrine taught by ibn Abd al-Wahaab revived the deviant views of the heretic Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah who was born in 1328. Prophet Muhammad (sa) left an imperative, clear warning saying, "Beware of the Shaykhu-n-Najdi, since he is satan." The renowned, traditional, Islamic scholars of the Shafii, Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali schools of jurisprudence denounced ibn Abd Al-Wahaab's flawed preaching, however, he traveled extensively spreading his innovative "bidda" doctrine and was subsequently proclaimed by those near and far as "Shaykhu-n-Najdi". Prophet Muhammad also said, "There will be people who come from the eastern part of Arabia who will recite the Koran, but their recitation will not pass beyond their collarbone. They will go out of Islam as swiftly as the arrow goes through the prey. Their sign is the shaving of their heads." This millennium biography is dedicated to the message, life and example of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (sa) and it would be inappropriate to delve deeper into the Wahabi corrupters of the Islamic faith in this reference. Our aim is to bring to our readers pure Islam. However, it is felt essential to warn unsuspecting seekers of truth,

who are perhaps discovering Islam and look to Saudi Arabia who perpetuate this evil, concealed terror promoting cult for guidance. For readers wishing to learn more about the heretical Wahabi cult, we invite you to read the articles appearing at the end of this book.

CHAPTER 132 THE FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE

Before the opening of Mecca the Angel Gabriel brought the Prophet (sa) a new chapter that exhorted the praise of his Lord and the asking of His forgiveness.

"When the victory of Allah and the opening comes, and you see people embracing the Religion of Allah in throngs, exalt with the praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness from Him. For indeed, He is the Turner (for the penitent)." Koran Chapter 110

The chapter was not only a sign that he would soon open Mecca, but also an indication that after these signs had been fulfilled his time upon earth would soon be at an end, however, it was not until later that he disclosed the indication to his daughter, Lady Fatima. As the middle of Ramadan approached the Prophet (sa) made his customary retreat to the Mosque in which he would spend ten consecutive days and nights. After the passing of the ten days he invited his companions to remain with him in the Mosque until Eid, which was a further ten days away. During the course of each year it was customary for the Arch Angel Gabriel to visit and recite the Holy Koran to him in its entirety after which the Prophet (sa) would recite it to Gabriel. That year Gabriel recited it twice and this confirmed his understanding that it would not be too long before he left this earthly life. As the time for the pilgrimage approached, the Prophet (sa) announced he would lead the pilgrimage that year. News spread throughout Arabia of his intent and over thirty-thousand pilgrims, men, women and children congregated in Medina from all quarters of Arabia. Later, Lady Ayesha narrated that some of the pilgrims had made the intention to offer the greater pilgrimage, whilst others, the lesser pilgrimage, and some both. Five days before the end of the month, the Prophet (sa) set off with the pilgrims for Mecca. That year all the Prophet's wives accompanied him, each riding in their own howdah, led by Abdur Rahman, Awf's son and Othman, Arfan's son.

THE BIRTH OF ABU BAKR'S SON

Amongst the pilgrims was the Prophet's long time friend and companion, Abu Bakr had been amongst the first to believe and had accompanied him during his migration to Medina ten years earlier. Asma, Abu Bakr's wife was expecting their child but did not want to miss the pilgrimage even though her delivery was near and so she decided to accompany her husband. On one of the halts along the pilgrimage route, Asma gave birth to their son who they named Muhammad. Abu Bakr planned to send mother and child back to Medina, but when the Prophet (sa) learned of his intent he told him to let her continue by making the major ablution, and then rededicating herself to offering the pilgrimage. Ten days after having left Medina the Prophet (sa) and the pilgrims reached the pass through which he had entered

Mecca on the day of its opening, and spent the night there. The following morning was the fourth day of Dhul Hijja whereupon the Prophet (sa) and his companions made their intention to offer the lesser pilgrimage and assumed the state of "Ihram", which is a state in which certain permissible deeds are no longer permissible to pilgrims, then donned the unstitched white robe of pilgrimage. Now that their intention had been made they resumed the final part of their journey into Mecca. Soon after, the Prophet (sa) gazed upon the beloved Ka'ba whereupon he released the rein's of his camel as he reverently raised his hands up high, as he supplicated, "O Allah, increase this House in honor and greatness; in bounty and in reverence, and piety that it gives to mankind." He now stood before Ka'ba then completed the seven rounds after which he offered his prayer at the Station of Abraham, which is the place where Abraham stood when he and his son Ishmael rebuilt the House of Allah. Then he proceeded to the hill of Safwa and supplicated as he walked quickly between it and the hill of Marwa seven times. Upon its completion the Prophet (sa) returned to the Mosque where Othman from the tribe of Abd Ad Dar, the keeper of the keys to Ka'ba, unlocked the door of Ka'ba and the Prophet (sa), together with Othman, Bilal and Osama entered inside. Entry into the Ka'ba does not constitute an obligatory part of the pilgrimage and later that day when the Prophet (sa) returned to Lady Ayesha's tent he mentioned his concern that because the pilgrims had seen him enter the Ka'ba they might l be disquieted if they were unable to enter it in the future whilst offering their pilgrimage. Umm Hani offered to accommodate the Prophet (sa) in her home, but he declined as he wished to remain near the beloved Ka'ba. As the time approached for the pilgrims to continue on to the valley of Mina, they assembled together and the Prophet (sa) mounted his camel. It was already late in the day when they reached Mina so they spent the night there and in the early light of the following morning, after the prayer, made their way through the valley of Arafat to the Mount of Arafat, which is often referred to as the Mount of Mercy, for Allah has said that upon the Day of Arafat He forgives more sins than on any other day. There they spent the rest of the day in prayer, reciting the Koran, exalting Allah and supplicating for His Mercy and Forgiveness.

THE FAREWELL SERMON

On the day of Arafat, the Prophet (sa) gave what was to become known as his "Farewell Sermon" it was concise, and yet another indication that the time was near at hand for him to meet his Lord. After praising and exalting Allah he began the sermon saying: "Time is running in the same manner as it did on the day Allah created the heavens and the earth. A year has twelve months four of which are sacred; three are consecutive -- Zul Ka'ad, Zul Hajj and Muharram. Rajab falls between Jumada and Sha'ban." Then he asked, 'What month is this?' and without exception, the vast congregation in total surrender replied, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' The Prophet (sa) remained silent for a while and they thought he was about to rename it. When he said, 'Isn't it Zul Hajj?' and they answered, 'Yes, indeed.' Then he asked, 'Which City is this?' whereupon they again replied in total surrender, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' The Prophet (sa) remained silent as before and again they thought he was about to rename it. Then he said, 'Isn't it the Sacred City (Mina)?' and they replied, 'Yes, indeed.' Then he asked, 'What day is this?' and once again they replied in total submission,

'Allah and His Messenger know best.' And again he remained silent and they thought he was about to rename it. Then he said, 'Isn't it the Day of Sacrifice?' and once again they replied, 'Yes, indeed.' Then he told them, 'Your lives, possessions and honor must be as sacred to one another as this Sacred Day, this month and City. Let those who are present take this message to those who are absent. You are about to meet your Lord, who will call you to account for your deeds. As of this day all sums of interest are remitted, including that of Abbas, son of Abd Al Muttalib. Every right arising from homicide in pre-Islamic days is henceforth waived, and the first such right that I waive is that arising from the murder of Rabiah the son of Al Harith, son of Abd Al Muttalib. O people! this day satan has despaired of re-establishing his power in this land of yours. Nevertheless, should you obey him, even in what may seem to you trifling, it will be a mater of pleasure for him. Beware of him, therefore, for the safety of your religion. O my people! you have certain rights over your wives and your wives have certain rights over you. Allah has entrusted them to your hands, so you must treat them with all kindness. It is your right that they do not associate on intimate terms with any one of whom you do not approve, and that they never commit adultery. All Muslims, free or enslaved, have the same rights and responsibilities. No one is higher than another unless he is higher in virtue. O people, even if an Abyssinian slave becomes your Amir (ruler), listen and obey him, as long as he executes the Book of Allah among you. O people! listen to what I say, and take it to heart. I leave you with the Book of Allah, and the ways of His Prophet (sa). If you follow them, you will never go astray. You must know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are equal. You are members of one common brotherhood. It is forbidden for any of you to take from his brother except that which the latter should willingly give. Do not oppress your people.' Then he asked. 'Have I conveyed the Command of Allah, have I conveyed the Command of Allah?' And they replied, 'Yes!' Then he supplicated, 'O Allah, bear witness." As the sun set the Day of Arafat drew to a close and after the offering of the evening prayer it was time to leave. The Prophet (sa) mounted his camel and with Osama riding behind him led the pilgrims at a modest pace on to Aqabah. In their eagerness to reach Aqabah, the pilgrims started to hasten their pace, whereupon the Prophet (sa) told them to slow down saying, "Gently, gently, in the quietness of the soul. Let those who are strong care for the weak." Lady Swaydah found it difficult to keep up with the rest of the pilgrims, so she sought the Prophet's permission to leave Muzdalifah in the coolness of the pre-dawn hours for Aqabah so that she might fulfill her duty before the multitude of pilgrims arrived. The Prophet (sa) gave his permission and Lady Umm Sulaym accompanied her with Abbas' son, Abdullah, leading the way. Now that the thin thread of light had appeared on the horizon it was time for the dawn prayer, so the call to prayer was made and the Prophet (sa) led the pilgrims in prayer. After its completion it was time to leave for Aqabah, but this time Fadl rode behind the Prophet (sa). Upon reaching Aqabah, the Prophet (sa) stoned the pillars seven times and as he did he exalted Allah saying, 'Allahu Akbar!' and the pilgrims took up the exaltation. It was now time to offer the consecrated animals and all were sacrificed as they remembered the first sacrifice, the sacrifice of Prophet Abraham so many centuries before. Now that the sacrifices had been offered, the Prophet (sa) called for a barber to shave his head and as his hair was shaved as pilgrims vied with one another receive a strand. Khalid was standing near the Prophet (sa) during his shaving and asked him for a lock of hair. Upon receiving it he pressed

it against his eyes and lips out of sincere love and place it securely under his turban and from that time onwards neither and an encounter nor was he killed in hostilities. After the pilgrims completed their shaving, the Prophet (sa) told them to press on to the Ka'ba and then return to spend that night and the next two at Mina, however, he and his wives did not leave immediately and remained in Aqabah until the afternoon before leaving for Ka'ba. Meanwhile, Lady Ayesha's monthly cycle arrived. After it stopped she took her cleansing bath and the Prophet (sa) told her to renew her intention to offer the pilgrimage. Then he asked her brother, Abdur Rahman, to accompany his sister to outside the Sacred precincts to begin her pilgrimage and them circumambulate the Ka'ba.

THE QUESTIONING OF THE KORAYSH

The pilgrimage to the House of Allah had been fulfilled, however, some of the new Koraysh converts questioned the validity of standing on Mount Arafat which lies some thirteen miles outside Mecca, saying that in the past they had not left the Holy Land when they went on pilgrimage. The Prophet (sa) informed them that Arafat was indeed an essential part of the obligatory rites of the pilgrimage established by Prophet Abraham, but on account of neglect, then disregard, it had become forgotten over the passage of time. Then he recited the Words of Allah:

"Then surge on from where the people surge and ask Allah for forgiveness. He is Forgiving and Most Merciful." Koran 2:199

and explained that "from where the people surge" referred to Arafat.

THE PROPHET (sa) AND THE NEWLY BORN

During the Farewell pilgrimage, a baby, who was given the name Mubarak Al Yamana, was born in Mecca and taken to the Prophet (sa). As soon as the baby was presented to the Prophet (sa) it spoke whereupon the Prophet (sa) said, "You have spoken the truth, may Allah bless you." The child did not spoke again for many years, in fact it wasn't until he became an adult that he spoke.

CHAPTER 133 THE RETURN FROM YEMEN

A few months before the pilgrimage, the Prophet (sa) received cordial letters from Yemen. He sent a contingent of three hundred men to collect the obligatory charity due at the end of Ramadan from the Muslims together with the poll tax levied upon those who had not converted but were protected by Muslims. News reached Mecca that the returning contingent had been spotted approaching Mecca, so Ali rode out to greet them and tell them to hasten on to Mecca in order to offer the pilgrimage. Amongst the charity and gifts they brought were several bales of cotton -- sufficient to clothe the entire contingent. Their own clothes had

become soiled from their journey so they asked Ali if they could use it to make clothes for the pilgrimage. However, Ali was not agreeable and told them that all must be taken to the Prophet (sa) for him to decide and distribute. After Ali returned to Mecca, the person in charge of the goods was persuaded to lend each man sufficient cloth for a fresh change of clothing and this he did. When they reached Mecca Ali met them and was surprised to see them all wearing clean clothes. When Ali asked the man in charge of the merchandise he replied, "I gave them some cloth so that they would reach the pilgrims with better appearance." Ali was upset that they had taken the matter into their own hands and not waited for the Prophet (sa) to determine its distribution and ordered them to take off their new clothes and put their old ones back on. This gave rise to discontent among the contingent but when the Prophet (sa) heard their murmuring he said, "O people, do not blame Ali, for he is zealous in the Path of Allah and should not be blamed." For those who heard his word it was sufficient, but for those unaware of the Prophet's statement, a feeling of unfairness stirred in their heart. Murmuring among the contingent continued to abound until one day a man went to the Prophet (sa) and complained against Ali whereupon the expression on the Prophet's changed as he asked, "Am I not closer to the believer than his self?" The man hung his head in shame as he agreed and the Prophet (sa) continued, "Whosoever I am closest to, Ali is closest to him." The pilgrimage with its festivities was over and it was time to return to Medina. When they reached Ghadir Al Khumm, the Prophet (sa) called for a halt and his followers around him. Then he took Ali by the hand and repeated what he said earlier then supplicated, "O Allah, be the Friend of whosoever is his friend, and the Enemy of him who is his enemy." From that moment onwards the murmuring against Ali was laid to rest.

v THE FALSE PROPHET

The Christian tribe of Hanifa had recently entered into Islam, however, it became apparent that all was not well amongst them when Musaylima laid claim that he had become a prophet. Soon after Prophet Muhammad's return to Medina a letter arrived from Haroun who was better know as Musaylima that read: From Musaylima, the Messenger of Allah To Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon you. I have been given the power to share your authority. Half of the earth is ours, and half belongs to the Koraysh, even though they are sinners." Having read the letter, the Prophet (sa) asked its bearers if this was also their opinion and they affirmed that it was. Then the Prophet (sa) spoke saying, "By Allah, if it was not for envoys to be put to death, I would indeed sever your heads!" The Prophet (sa) called for his scribe and dictated a letter for the envoys to delivery to Musaylima. He commenced, "From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to Musaylima, the liar. Peace be upon he that follows guidance. Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah. He causes whom He will of His worshipers to inherit it. Only those who fear their Lord will prosper." The Prophet (sa) decided not to act hastily so he postponed dealing with the matter.

THE EMERGENCE OF CONCEALED EMOTIONS

Musaylima was not the only person deviate, a woman from the tribe of Tamin by the name of

Sajah claimed to have become a prophetess. From Yemen, Aswad, Kabs son rose up against the Prophet (sa) and gained control over a considerable area, but his uprising was short lived. Aswad was a proud man and his new subjects disliked his arrogance, so it wasn't surprising when, after just a few months he was assassinated. Tulayha from the tribe of Asad renounced Islam, and was yet another to rise up against the Prophet (sa) but this time the Prophet (sa) sent Khalid against him. Several months later, the expert Abyssinian spear thrower, Wahshi, took aim at Musaylima and his spear pierced his hand. Abdullah, Nusaybah's son seized the moment and put an end to him with the smite of his sword.

CHAPTER 134 THE 11TH YEAR

It was now the eleventh year since the migration and during the month of Safar the Prophet (sa) decided it was time to settle the unfinished matter at Mutah, in which a legion of the Roman army had joined the northern Syrian Arabs against the Muslims. Despite his youthfulness, the Prophet (sa) appointed Osama, the son of the martyred Zayd, to command the three-thousand strong army of Muslims against the northern tribes.

THE VISIT TO THE CEMETERY

One night, after preparations for the march were underway, and the army had retired, the Prophet (sa) called upon his attendant, Abu Muwayhibah, who had at one time been sold into slavery but now a free man, saying, "I have been ordered to supplicate for forgiveness for the people in the cemetery, so come with me." In the stillness of the night they made their way to the cemetery whereupon the Prophet (sa) greeted its inhabitants saying, "Peace be upon you, O people of the graves. Rejoice in your condition, it is much better than that of those who live. Dissension comes as waves following each other upon the darkest night, and each is worse than the last." Then he spoke to Abu Muwayhibah saying, "I have been offered the keys to the treasures of this world and immortality followed by Paradise, and I have also been given the choice between it and meeting my Lord and Paradise." Abu Muwayhibah could not restrain himself and said, "Take the keys of the treasures of this world with its immortality followed by Paradise." But the Prophet (sa) gently told him, "I have already chosen the meeting with my Lord and Paradise." Then the Prophet (sa) turned towards the graves and supplicated for the forgiveness of their inhabitants.

THE LAST ILLNESS OF THE PROPHET (sa)

On the anniversary of the attempt to poison the Prophet (sa) he would suffer from its recurring effect and its time had come around once more. It was either the morning after his visit to the cemetery, or a morning shortly thereafter, that the Prophet (sa) experienced an intense headache, the like of which he had never experienced before. Despite his headache he went to the Mosque and led the congregation in the dawn prayer then climbed the pulpit and supplicated for blessings upon those who had been martyred at Uhud. Then he said, "There is

a worshiper among the worshipers of Allah to whom Allah has given the choice between this world and that which is with Him. The worshiper has chosen that which is with Allah." Abu Bakr, who was in the congregation, was deeply affected by the Prophet's remark and began to weep, for he knew that the worshiper the Prophet (sa) referred to was non other than Prophet Muhammad (sa) himself, and that he would not be with them for much longer. As Abu Bakr wept, the Prophet (sa) knew that he understood what he had said and said, "O people, the most merciful of men to me in both companionship and generosity is Abu Bakr. If I were to take from all mankind an inseparable companion, it would be Abu Bakr, but companionship and brotherhood in belief is ours until Allah unites us in His Presence."

THE MEETING AT THE POOL

Several homes had been built on to the external wall of the Mosque, and like the apartments of the Prophet's wives, they had doors that opened into the prayer area. As the Prophet (sa) glanced around the Mosque he instructed all the doors except that of Abu Bakr to be walled up. Before descending from the pulpit the Prophet (sa) spoke once more saying, "I go before you, and I am your witness. Your meeting with me is at the Pool. As I stand here, indeed I see it. I do not fear for you on account of reversion to idolatry, rather, it is the world I fear for you if you seek to vie with one another for its gain." Then the Prophet (sa) left the Mosque and returned to the apartment of Lady Maymunah. The Prophet's headache worsened as the signs of fever appeared but after having rested for a while he went briefly to Lady Ayesha's apartment to let her know he was unwell. Lady Ayesha was also suffering from a headache and said as the Prophet (sa) entered, "Oh my head!" Whereupon the Prophet (sa) said: "No, Ayesha it is indeed my head." The Prophet (sa) looked at her gentle face to see if perhaps she too was suffering from a life threatening sickness but could see no sign then said, "Would that it might be whilst I am alive, so that I might ask forgiveness for you and supplicate for mercy upon you, then shroud and pray over you, then bury you." Lady Ayesha had never heard the Prophet (sa) speak like this before and when she looked at is face she could see he was very unwell but tried to make light of the situation and brought a smile to his face. Then he repeated, "No, it is indeed my head," and returned to Lady Maymunah's apartment. When the Prophet (sa) was in good health, Lady Ayesha heard him say, "A Prophet never dies until he as been shown his place in Paradise and is then given the option to live or die." And when she learned of the Prophet's brief sermon that morning she knew that he would not be with her for much longer. Despite the worsening of his illness, Prophet Muhammad (sa) continued to led his congregation in prayer. As is sickness intensified he offered the prayer in the sitting position and told the congregation to do likewise. The Prophet (sa) was now so weak and exhausted that when he returned to the apartment of the wife in whose turn it was asked, "Where am I tomorrow, and where the next day?" so his wife told him. His wife sensed that he wished to be in Lady Ayesha's apartment and called her co-wives together who went to him saying, "O Messenger of Allah, we have given our days with you to our sister Ayesha." The Prophet (sa) gratefully accepted their loving kindness and with the assistance of Abbas and Ali, the Prophet (sa) was helped to Lady Ayesha's apartment.

OSAMA, COMMANDER OF THE ARMY

As the Prophet (sa) lay in his feverish state in Lady Ayesha's apartment, word reached him that preparations for the army's march now under the command of Osama had slowed down. Despite his suffering, the Prophet (sa) felt the necessity to confirm Osama's position, so he asked his wives to bring seven skins of water, each from a different well, and for the water to be poured over him. Lady Hafsa fetched a tub and he sat in it while the water was poured gently over him to reduce his fever. His wives dressed him and wrapped cloth around his head and with two of his companions supporting him he went into the Mosque and sat down upon the pulpit then said, "O people, dispatch Osama with his army. You question his leadership as you questioned his father's before him, yet he is worthy to take command, just as his father was." Then, with the help of his companions the Prophet (sa) was assisted back to Lady Ayesha's apartment. Preparations for the march resumed in earnest and soon after they were ready to march. Osama led the army out of Medina but just three miles outside the City limits, at a placed called Jurf, he called upon them to halt and strike camp.

ABU BAKR LEADS THE PRAYER

It was time for the next prayer to be offered but the Prophet was no longer able to lead the prayer, not even from the sitting position. The Prophet (sa) told his wives to ask Abu Bakr to lead the prayer. Lady Ayesha said, "O Messenger of Allah (sa), Abu Bakr is a very tender-hearted man, his voice is not strong and is given to weeping when he recites the Koran," and suggested that perhaps Omar should lead the prayer. However, the Prophet (sa) insisted upon Abu Bakr. Lady Ayesha glanced at Lady Hafsa to try to enlist her help, but the Prophet (sa) would not hear of it and said, "You are like the women that were with Joseph. Inform Abu Bakr that he is to lead the prayer. Let those who wish to blame find fault and let the ambitious aspire. Allah and the believers will not have it otherwise," and he repeated the last sentence three times, whereupon Abu Bakr led the prayer for the remaining days of his illness.

THE TIME OF DEPARTURE

All the wives of the Prophet (sa) comforted and tenderly cared for the Prophet. When visitors entered they would often find him with his head cradled upon Lady Ayesha's lap or propped up so that he rested against her chest. The Prophet's beloved daughter, Lady Fatima, was a constant visitor and upon her arrival Lady Ayesha would withdraw so that they could spend some time alone together. On one such occasion the Prophet (sa) called Lady Fatima to his side and told her something in secret that caused her to weep. Then he spoke to her again with comforting words and she began to laugh. After his soul had been taken from him, and it became obligatory that his words should not be concealed, Lady Ayesha asked what the Prophet (sa) had said to her that caused her to weep then laugh, she said, "I wept when he told me he was about to die from his illness, but when he told me I would be the first of his family to join him, I became happy and laughed."

AL MAHDI, THE GUIDED LEADER, THE RESTORER OF THE ISLAMIC RELIGION

Ali, Lady Fatima's husband was another frequent visitor to the Prophet (sa) during this time. One day as he entered the room he found his wife crying as she sat beside her father, and the Messenger of Allah (sa) raised his tired eyes to look up at her and asked, "O Fatima, what makes you cry?" She replied, "I fear the loss after you." With gentleness of voice he said, "Don't you know that Allah, the Mighty, the Glorified, looked to the earth once and chose your father and sent him with His Message; then He looked once more to the earth and chose your husband and made known to me that I should let you marry him? O Fatima, we are the Dwellers of a House, and Allah has given us seven merits which He never gave to anyone else before, and they will not be given to anyone after us." Then, referring to the descendants of his grandsons, Hasan and Husain, he said, �much By He who sends me with the truth, amongst both of them is Al Mahdi of this nation. When life is full of murder and strife, and trials increase, and roads are blocked, and people start to attack one another, and the elderly are not merciful to the young, nor the young merciful to the old, Allah, the Mighty, the Glorified, will send from them (Hasan and Husain) at the end of time, one who will open the fortress of error, and open hearts that have been sealed, then restore the Religion as I established it in the beginning. He will fill the world with justice to the extent that it has been filled with oppression."

OSAMA'S RETURN TO MEDINA

Osama could not bear to leave the Prophet (sa) in such condition so he returned to Medina to visit him. As he entered the room, he found the Prophet (sa) to be conscious, but too ill to speak. Osama bent over and kissed him whereupon the Prophet (sa) raised his hand, with his palm facing upwards in supplication for blessings upon Osama, Osama felt it would be the last time he would see the Prophet (sa) in this life and left with great sadness to return to the camp. The next day, Monday, 12th of Rabi 1, the Prophet's fever eased, and although he was extremely weak he summoned all his energy and was assisted to the Mosque by Thawban and Fadl. The dawn prayer had already commenced and when the congregation realized he was amongst them they were overjoyed. As he saw them at prayer his face shone with great happiness in a way that Anas was heard to say later on, "I have never seen the Prophet's face more beautiful than it was at that hour." Abu Bakr, who was leading the prayer, sensed his presence and so without turning his head, which would annul the prayer, he stepped back for the Prophet (sa) to continue its leadership. However, the Prophet (sa) placed his hand on his shoulder and nudged him to resume whilst he seated himself by his side and offered his prayer with him. After the prayer, the Prophet (sa) remained for sometime in the Mosque and the congregation rejoiced as they thought his condition had taken a turn for the better. Soon after Osama, who was so very worried about the Prophet's condition, returned to Medina yet again and was overjoyed to see that he was able to pray once again in the Mosque. The Prophet (sa) told Osama: "Go forth, with the blessings of Allah." Whereupon Osama greeted him with peace then took his leave with a cheerful heart and ordered his army to prepare

themselves to resume the march. Fadl and Thawban helped the Prophet (sa) to return to Lady Ayesha's room whilst Ali and Abbas followed them, however, the Prophet (sa) was very tired and so they did not stay long. As they left the apartment, anxious inquirers asked after the Prophet's health, whereupon Ali replied, "Praise be to Allah, he is better." However, Abbas had noticed a certain look upon the Prophet's face and told Ali: 'By Allah, in three days, you will be governed by some one else. And by Allah, I feel that the Messenger of Allah (sa) will die from this sickness, for I know the look of death upon the face of the children of Abdul Muttalib. Let us go to him and ask who is to receive the caliphate. If it is given to us we will know what to do, but if it is given to someone else we will inform him so that he may tell the new caliph to take care of us." But Ali remembered how in the past when people had asked the Prophet (sa) for a position he would refuse so he replied, "By Allah, if we ask the Messenger of Allah (sa) for it and he refuses to give it to us, the people will never give it to us after that. By Allah, I will not ask the Messenger of Allah (sa) for it." Meanwhile, Abdur Rahman, Lady Ayesha's brother had entered the apartment to visit the Prophet (sa) and in his hand was his "siwak", which is part of the root of a tree, splayed at the end for use as a toothbrush. Lady Ayesha knew how much the Prophet (sa) loved his teeth to be clean so she asked Abdur Rahman if she might use it. Abdur Rahman nodded and she softened the splayed ends then cleaned his teeth. With great respect, the Angel of Death appeared to the Prophet (sa) and asked his permission to take away his precious soul, whereupon he gave his permission. Never before or after this time has the Angel of Death ever asked anyone for their permission to take away their soul. The throes of death were evident upon his face as he dipped his hand into a jug of water then rubbed his wetted hand over his face uttering the words, "There is no god except Allah, death has its agonies." Then he lapsed into a state of unconsciousness for a while and as he regained consciousness for the last time he gazed upwards towards the ceiling and raised his hands saying, "O Allah, with the highest companion," until he could no longer raise them as the angels gently took away his very precious soul. The last Prophet and Messenger of Allah (sa) had passed away at the age of sixty-three. Immense sadness descended upon the household and his wives began to weep, as, with tender loving care, Lady Ayesha laid his head gently down upon the pillow and covered him with a cloak. It was indeed the saddest occasion ever known and so Allah in His Mercy sent angels to comfort his beloved family. Later, Lady Ayesha was heard to say concerning the severity of his pangs of death, "After having seen those of the Prophet (sa), I have never disliked seeing those of anyone else."

OSAMA'S RETURN

When it became apparent that the Messenger of Allah (sa) had reached the final throes of death, Umm Ayman sent word to Osama of his condition. The army had already broken camp and were on the point of marching northward, but as soon as Osama received the news he ordered their return to Medina. Several of the more senior companions were with Osama amongst whom was Omar who found it difficult to accept the fact that the Prophet (sa) would die before them. Omar had misunderstood a verse in the Koran and thought that the Prophet (sa) would outlive not only his generation but generations yet unborn. Upon his arrival in Medina he went directly to the Mosque and addressed the heart-broken congregation, who

were for the most part Muhajir, assuring them that the Prophet (sa) was only absent in spirit and would return.

ABU BAKR LEARNS OF THE PROPHET'S DEATH

Meanwhile, the news of the Prophet's passing had just reached Abu Bakr, who had been visiting his new wife Habiba, whereupon he jumped upon his horse and rode straight to Lady Ayesha's apartment. Upon his arrival he gently drew back the cloak covering the Prophet's face and kissed him saying, "Dearer than my father and mother, you have tasted death which Allah has decreed for you. Death will never overtake you again." Then, with sadness of heart, he gently covered his blessed face, and went into the Mosque where Omar was still speaking with great passion. As Abu Bakr approached Omar he said, "Gently, Omar. Hear what I have to say.' But Omar continued, then, when the congregation saw that Abu Bakr had something to say, they turned towards him to listen. Before Abu Bakr began to speak he exalted Allah then said, "O people, whosoever was inclined to worship Muhammad -- in truth Muhammad is dead, but whosoever worships Allah, in truth Allah is Alive and does not die." Then he recited verses from the Koran:

"Muhammad is not except a Messenger; Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed will you turn about on your heels? And he who turns on his heels will not harm Allah a thing. Allah will recompense the thankful." Koran 3:144

The verse comforted the believers, who, until that moment although the verse was well known, had not recalled it during this time of grief. When Omar heard this verse he was so overcome that his knees weakened and he fell to the ground as he accepted the fact that the Prophet (sa) had been taken from them. Whilst Abu Bakr and Omar were in the Mosque, Talha and Zubair returned with Ali to his home to mourn their loss.

A MATTER OF SUCCESSION

Meanwhile the Ansars, had met together in their assembly room to share their grief and the matter of their leadership arose. Several expressed their opinion that they, the Ansars, should have authority over the tribes now that the Prophet (sa) was no longer with them. When news of the discussion reached Abu Bakr, Omar encouraged Abu Bakr to go with him and Ubayda to the assembly room. As they entered one of the Ansars had started to address the assembly on behalf of himself and his tribe. He had started by exalting Allah and had just said, "We are the Ansars, helpers of Allah, the fighters of Islam," then he saw the three and continued saying, "and you, the Muhajir, the emigrants, are like us for a number of your people have settled amongst us," and continued to praise both parties, however the speech failed to recognize the very special position the Muhajirs held for amongst them were not only relatives of the Prophet (sa) whom he had praised and supplicated for, but also those who had been the first followers of the Prophet (sa) and sacrificed everything they owned in order to follow him. It

was evident to Abu Bakr and his companions that if they were left to elect their own leader then other tribes would do likewise. The result would be that the unity of Muslims would begin to unravel, and that there would no longer be one, overall authoritative leader, caliph, to whom all would be obliged to follow but many -- the result of such a situation is apparent in the demise of Muslims today. The Ansar had finished his speech and Omar wanted to speak but Abu Bakr gestured to him to refrain and spoke to the assembly in a way that was both tactful but firm. He reminded them that Islam had spread throughout Arabia and was no longer limited just to Mecca and Medina, and that Arabs from other parts of Arabia would not accept a leader other than a Koraysh. He concluded his speech by taking hold of the hands of his two companions and raising them saying, "I offer you your choice of these two men, give your allegiance to whichever one of these you will." Whereupon one of the Ansars suggested that there should be two authorities. Omar spoke saying, "O Ansars, don't you realize that the Messenger of Allah (sa) ordered Abu Bakr to lead the prayer?" and they replied that they did, "then," continued Omar, "which of you will take precedence over him?" Until that moment they had not considered the importance of Abu Bakr leading the prayer whereupon in one voice they said, "May Allah forbid that we take precedence over him!" and the matter of the caliphate was determined as Omar caught hold of Abu Bakr's hand and pledged allegiance to him. Omar's companion followed his initiative, then others of the Muhajir, who had by then joined them, pledged their allegiance followed by the Ansars. The following morning, before Abu Bakr led the prayer he sat upon the pulpit whilst Omar got up and addressed the congregation inviting them to pledge their allegiance to Abu Bakr, of whom he referred to as being the best among them, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah, and the second of the two in the cave. With the exception of Ali, who did so later, all stepped forward and pledged their allegiance to Abu Bakr. After the allegiance had been taken, Abu Bakr exalted Allah and thanked Him, then addressed the congregation saying, "I have been given authority over you. However, I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me; but if I do wrong, correct me. Since regard for truth is loyalty, whereas disregard for truth is treachery. Allah willing, those who are weak amongst you will be supported by me until I have secured your rights. Allah willing, the strong among you shall be weak with me until I have exacted the rights of others. Obey me as long as I obey Allah and His Messenger (sa), but, if I disobey Allah and His Messenger (sa), you do not owe obedience to me. Arise now for prayer, may Allah have mercy upon you."

THE PLACE OF REST

It was time for the Prophet (sa) to be laid to rest, however, the companions were uncertain how they should best prepare him, for he was not like ordinary men. Then, Allah in His Mercy caused a deep slumber to overtake them in which each heard a voice saying, "Wash the Prophet (sa) with his garment upon him." When they awoke they told each other of the voice and were happy to know that they had all heard the same instruction so they went to Lady Ayesha's apartment where he lay to give him his final bath. When they reached Lady Ayesha's apartment, Aws, Khawli's son from the tribe of Khazraj pleaded with Ali to let him represent the Ansars. Ali agreed and he entered with them. Abbas and his sons Fadl and Kitham helped Ali to turn his body whilst Osama, assisted by Shukran and the attendant of the Prophet (sa)

poured the warmed water over him. The Prophet (sa) had passed away wearing a long woolen robe and now that it had been wetted, Ali gently rubbed his hand over it and as he did he said, "Dearer than my father and my mother, how excellent you are in both life and death," and the Prophet (sa) appeared to all who saw him just as if he was asleep. The matter now arose as to where he should be laid to rest. Some thought that it should be near the graves of his daughters and his son Abraham, whilst others where of the opinion that he should be buried in the Mosque. The matter was resolved when Abu Bakr told them that he had heard the Prophet (sa) once say, "No Prophet dies except he is buried where he died." Whereupon a grave was dug in the floor of Lady Ayesha's room near the bed on which he lay. As the Prophet (sa) was being covered by earth, Lady Fatima said, "How can you reconcile yourselves, pouring dust over the Messenger of Allah (sa)?" Grief engulfed the City, even Yazid, the Prophet's donkey missed his caring master so much that he pined himself away, then jumped into a well where he died. As the Prophet (sa) had prophesied, Lady Fatima joined him but a few months later. Ali gave his allegiance to Abu Bakr saying, "We are well aware of your position and what Allah has given you. It is not on account of jealousy or of any benefit He has caused to befall you, rather, it was because the matter was decided without consultation, thereby leaving us with no option. We felt that we had some claim on account of our nearness in kinship to the Messenger of Allah (sa)." When Abu Bakr heard these touching words his eyes overflowed with tears and said, "By Him in whose hand is my soul, I would rather that all should be well between me and the family of the Messenger of Allah (sa) than between me and my own family." That same morning at the time of the mid-day prayer, Ali pledged his allegiance to Abu Bakr in the Mosque for all to witness, and all was well.

PROPHETIC HOMESTEAD

Although we were not fortunate to be blessed to be alive during the life time of Prophet Muhammad (sa), and therefore unable to see him, or taste his presence, we are able to get a fragrant glimpse of his physical description and characteristics that were preserved by the companions and passed down to us by the great scholars of Islam. The best description of Prophet Muhammad (sa) was given by Lady Ayesha when she was asked to describe the Prophet (sa). She said, "His example and character were those of the Koran." And so it is that he was and is and will be forever, our best living, exemplary model.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S (sa) GENEALOGY

His parents were Amina, daughter of Wahb and Abdullah, son of Abd Al Muttalib, the son of Hashim, son of Abd Manaf, son of Ksay, son of Kilab, son of Murrah, son of Ka'b, son of Lu'ayy, son of Ghalib, son of Fihr, son of Malik, son of Nadir, son of Kinanah, son of Khuzayma, son of Ilyas, son of Mudar, son of Nizar, son of Ma'aad, son of Adnan, son of Udd, son of Udad, son of Al Yasu, son of Yashub, son of Hamil, son of Kaydar, son of Prophet Ishmael, son of Prophet Abraham, son of Azar, son of Tarikh, son of Yahur, son of Ushru, son of Arghu, son of Kalun. son of Faligh, son of Amir, son of Shaligh, son of Arfakhshad, son of

Shem, son of Prophet Noah, son of Malik, son of Mattushalakh, son of Akhnukh, son of Yard, son of Mahla'il, son of Kinan, son of Anush, son of Kinan, son of Shith, son of Prophet Adam Peace be upon all the Prophets

AN INSIGHT INTO HIS NOBLE CHARACTER, NATURE AND PHYSICAL FEATURES

No written description of our beloved Prophet (sa) can ever do justice to his exceptional beauty. Lady Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with her, described him as being more handsome than Prophet Joseph for whom the wives of Pharaoh's ministers slit their hands on account of his handsome appearance. She said: "If the friends of Zulayka had seen the blessed face of the Messenger of Allah (sa) they would have cut their hearts instead of their hands!" A portion of Prophet Muhammad's inner beauty manifested itself externally and illuminated his very being. Kurtubi, a great scholar of Islam, said that if his entire beauty had been made manifest, it would have been impossible for anyone to look at him.

SELF DESCRIPTION

The Prophet (sa) said: "The prophets were shown to me. I saw Moses, peace be upon him, he had a slender body, like a man from the tribe of Shanuah. I saw Jesus, peace be upon him, from all those I have seen, he resembles Urwah the son of Masood. I saw Abraham, peace be upon him, and from all those I have seen I most resemble him .. "

HIS FACE

His complexion has been described as being somewhat delicately wheaten in color or whitish with a reddish tones. His face was luminous, almost round, but not round, and frequently compared to the beauty of the full moon when it reached its zenith. He had a broad forehead and his eyebrows were separate and thick with densely fine hair. When the Prophet (sa) became displeased a vein between his eyebrows became enlarged. His eyes were jet black and his eyelashes long, mascared with kohl made from ithmid that he applied thrice to each eye before sleeping. Our Prophet (sa) tells us that: "... kohl made from ithmid used on the eye brightens the eyesight. Also, it strengthens and increases the growth of the eye lashes." His companions said that even when he did not use kohl, his eyes looked as if he had. His nose was prominently distinguished. His cheeks were smooth and well covered whilst his proportionally perfect mouth was neither large nor yet small. His teeth were bright, slim and evenly spaced, however, the space between his front teeth was slightly larger. As for the thickness of his beard, it was dense. His hair was slightly wavy, sometimes it was cut short and at other times he wore it nearly shoulder length. When his hair had the tendency to part itself in the middle he wore it that way, otherwise he did not dress it in that fashion. His habit was to use oil on his hair and so as not to soil his turban he would place a piece of cloth between it and his hair. When he went on pilgrimage to Mecca, he would shave his hair. The

Prophet (sa) would dress his hair and his beard using his right hand. It was not his practice to dress his hair every day, in fact, he prohibited it, unless there was a valid reason, and would dress his hair every third day. In later life, the Prophet had several silver hairs on his temples. It has been reported that they ranged between fourteen and twenty. The accuracy of these reports is equally valid as they came over a period of time. One day, when Abu Bakr first noticed the silver hairs, he said: "O Messenger of Allah, you have become old," whereupon the Prophet (sa) said: "The recitation of the chapters Hud, Waaki'ah, Mursalaat, 'Amma and Kukkirah have made me old." It was the practice of elderly men to dye their hair before they went off to fight to disguise their age. According to the Shafii and Hanafi schools of jurisprudence, the Prophet (sa) either forbade or disapproved the use of a completely black dye except in war but permitted the use of henna, which is a reddish dye, and approved its mixing with katm, which is a black dye extracted from a certain grass. However, the katm must be used in a lesser quantity in order that the hair does not become totally black, rather, a darker tone of red.

HIS NECK, SHOULDERS, SEAL AND TORSO

The Prophet (sa) had well-covered broad shoulders and between them lay the Seal of his prophethood. The seal was a piece of raised flesh approximately the size of a pigeon's egg surrounded by hair. Between his broad chest and navel grew a fine line of hair, as for his bones they were large and well proportioned. He was a man of medium stature, neither thin nor fat.

HIS FEET

The soles of his feet were fully fleshed whereas his heels were slim.

HIS MANNER OF WALKING

The Prophet's walk is described in the hadiths as being "Yatakaffaoo". The scholars of Islam interpret this word in three ways. There are those who are of the opinion that it means he walked at a fast pace, whilst others say it means he leaned forward a little as he walked; the third opinion is that he lifted his leg forcefully. We also learn from the hadiths that he walked quickly and took longer strides rather than short ones. We do know that he never walked haughtily with his chest puffed out with pride, nor did he scuff his feet as he walked. When walking with his companions he always asked them to walk in front of him on account of his modesty. When he was on a journey he rode at the back so that he could be with the weak or bereaved. Whenever he met someone, he was always the first person to greet with peace.

HIS MANNER OF LOOKING

A hadith informs us that it was his custom to always look down towards the ground, and

another says that he gazed up towards the sky. The hadiths do no contradict one another as the Prophet (sa) in day-to-day affairs, modestly looked towards the ground whereas when he awaited a Revelation he would look towards to sky. He never stared at anything

HIS HEIGHT

It has been reported that he was a little taller than the average man, however, when he was amongst tall people his height was miraculous altered so that he became taller than those in his company.

HIS AGE

There are authentic hadiths that differ concerning his age. However, the scholars of Islam are of the opinion that this difference arose on account of some companions not counting the year he was born and the year he died. The consensus is that he was sixty-three years old when he was laid to rest.

HIS BATHING

None of the wives of the Prophet (sa) and his family, saw his private parts, neither did he see theirs.

HIS MANNER OF COMMUNICATION

When the Prophet (sa) spoke to anyone, he would not just turn his face in order to converse, rather, he would either turn his whole body towards that person, or turn his face and torso in order to speak to the person directly; he was not proud man. It was not his practice to glance to the side when he spoke with anyone. His speech was deliberate and clear so that those sitting in his blessed company would remember what he said. When he wished to stress a point, he would repeat it three times. It was not his custom to indulge in frivolous talk.

HIS STORY TELLING

The Prophet (sa) would often tell his wives stories and each story contained a guiding moral.

HIS MANNER OF LEANING

It has been reported that the Prophet (sa) would lean against a pillow placed on his left side, however, he never leaned against anything whilst eating. During his last illness, Fadl entered his room and found him wearing a yellow band around his forehead. After they had exchanged greetings he asked Fadl to tighten the band around his noble head, which he did. Then, he sat up and stood up supporting himself on Fadl's shoulder and entered the Mosque. When the

Messenger of Allah (sa) he would rest his head against one of his wives or companions. When he passed away, his head rested upon Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her.

HIS MANNER OF EATING AND DRINKING

He ate with his right hand and would lick his fingers. Sometimes he used three fingers, at other time five. He never ate food from a table, nor a small plate, nor did he eat pita type bread. He ate from a leather cloth and did not cut his meat with a knife, rather, he would bite off a piece and chew it. The Messenger of Allah (sa) drank from a large wooden cup with a metal lining. He also drank from a water-skin with a cleaned spout. When the Prophet (sa) drank from the water of Zamzam, he stood. However, on most occasions he sat. He advocated drinking in smallish sips rather than gulping down all at once. This blessed advice not to drink in one gulp is now proven to be detrimental to the liver and stomach.

HIS BREAD AND FOOD

His bread was made from stone ground barley flour which has a coarse texture. A sieve was never used to refine the flour therefore large particles of grain often remained which were extracted. As for the quantity of bread, there was never sufficient bread in his household with which to fill his stomach. Many a night he and his family went to bed without having eaten because there was no food. It was the custom of the Holy Family to give away their food to those in need, seeking a reward from Allah, the Most High. He advocated the use of olive oil not only for cooking but for massage. He also used vinegar and would eat the meat of fowl. He ate honey, the meat of goat and lamb with a preference for the meat of a shoulder of lamb. Amongst the other things he ate were dates. One day the Prophet (sa) found some dates that had fallen on the ground. He told his companions he would have eaten them if he could have been sure they were not originally intended to be given in charity, for it is forbidden that he or his family should eat from charity. He also ate cucumber and water melon with dates. Dates were also soaked in water to provide a sweet drink, however, they were never left long enough to ferment. The Prophet (sa) would drink water and milk. Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, said that he liked a drink that was cold and sweet. When he was given milk he would supplicate saying: "O Allah, grant us blessing in it and increase it for us." He also told his companions that there is nothing that serves both as food and water other than milk. It was the custom of the Prophet (sa) to feed his companions before he himself ate.

HIS MANNER BEFORE AND AFTER EATING

The Prophet (sa) always said: "Bismillah" before he started to eat. One day as he and his companions were eating a hungry man joined them and forgot to say Bismillah, as he was about to take the last bite he remembered and said: "Bismillah in its beginning at end", whereupon the Prophet (sa) informed that until that point satan, the stoned and cursed, had

been eating with him, but when he heard him say this he vomited all that he had eaten. One day Omar, Abi Salamah's son entered while food was being served. The Prophet (sa) invited him to sit down and told him: "O my son, come near and recite Bismillah and eat with your right hand from the portion which is in front of you." He also told his companions to use their right hand alone to eat and drink with as satan eats and drinks with his left hand. After he finished eating he would thank Allah saying: "Praise be to Allah who fed us, and given us drink, and made us Muslims."

HIS SLEEPING

Each night before he slept, the Prophet (sa) would lay down on his right side and supplicate: "O Allah, In Your Name I live and die." When he awoke he would supplicate: "Praise be to Allah, who restored to us life, having caused us to die and to Him shall be the Resurrection." Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, reported that before he slept he would cup his hands together, blow on them then recite the chapters Al Ikhlas, Al Falak, and An Naas then wipe his hands over the parts of his body he could reach, this he did three times starting with the head, then his face, followed by the front part of his body.

HIS WORSHIP

Everything our beloved Prophet (sa) said was an act of worship, and the following are but a few of the numerous examples. Although he was absolutely sinless and promised the highest rank in Paradise, a rank in which no other prophet has attained, it did not prevent him from offering multiple voluntary prayers, which is an indication of our own need to increase and maintain the number of voluntary prayers we offer. The importance for us to offer voluntary prayer was often stressed by the Prophet (sa). Our beloved Prophet (sa) would offer such long prayers that his legs became swollen. One of his companions asked him why he offered such lengthy prayers when Allah had forgiven him all his sins. The Prophet replied, "Should I not be a grateful worshipper?" It was his practice to sleep after the Isha prayer for the first portion of the night, then awake to offer his voluntary prayers until the time one would take breakfast before fasting. At that time he would offer the last prayer of the night, which is the Witr prayer. Then, he would return to his apartment and sleep until the call for the Dawn prayer was made, when he would make either the major or minor ablution in readiness for the prayer. The voluntary night prayers of the Prophet would commence with two short units of prayer followed by very long units of prayer that varied in number. Sometimes he would offer ten units of prayer followed by the Witr making a total of thirteen -- this number was never exceeded - then at other times he would offer eight units of prayer followed by the Witr prayer. Whenever he was unable to offer his prayer during the night, Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, said that he would offer twelve units of prayer before mid-day. She also commented that he offered his prayers in the most perfect manner. There was a time when she asked him: "O Messenger of Allah (sa) do you sleep before you offer Witr?" He replied: "O Ayesha, my eyes sleep, but my heart remains awake." This blessed state is a special gift bestowed upon the prophets. During Ramadan he would offer many of the Taraweeh prayers

in the Mosque, and told his companions that those who stand with sincere faith and hope in prayer during the Night of Al Kadr will have their sins forgiven. When he did not offer his Taraweeh prayer with the congregation he would offer them at home. When he was ill, the Prophet (sa) would offer his prayer sitting down until between thirty and forty verses remained when he would stand and recite them, then he would bow and prostrate, he did the same in the second unit of prayer. Omar said that he offered two units of prayer before and after the mid-day prayer, and two units of prayer after the evening prayer and two units of prayer after the night prayer with the Prophet (sa).

HIS FAST

Other than the obligatory fast of Ramadan, the Prophet (sa) observed voluntary fasts. Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, said that after the migration to Medina the Prophet (sa) did not fast an entire month except for the month of Ramadan. She also said in another hadith that he would fast most of the month of Shabaan. We are also told that he would fast some days of a month and none at all in another. Of the days he is known to have fasted Monday and Thursday received his special attention. Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, reported the Prophet (sa) saying: "I was born on a Monday, and the sending down of the Koran commenced on a Monday." Abu Hurayrah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "Deeds are presented (to Allah, the Most High) on Mondays and Thursdays. I desire that my deeds be presented whilst I am fasting." Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, said: "Some months he would fast on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays, whereas in other months he would fast on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays." She also said that he did not fast on specific days, but whenever suitable. Abdullah, the son of Masood, reported that he seldom fasted on a Friday. He would also fast on the 13th, 14th and 15th day of the Islamic month, also on the tenth of Muharram and the 10th of Dhul Hijjah. After the Prophet's migration he observed some Jews observing the fast on the tenth of Muharram, which is the fast of Ashura. He asked them why they were fasting and was told that it was the day on which Allah, the Most High, saved Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, from Pharaoh, and that it was also the day on which Allah, the Most High, drowned Pharaoh. They told the Prophet (sa) that Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, would fast that day out of gratitude and happiness whereupon our beloved Prophet Muhammad (sa) said, "We are more entitled than you to follow Moses, peace be upon him." Thereafter the Prophet (sa) obligated his followers to fast on that day. This fast was obligatory until the command came to fast the month of Ramadan, thereafter the Prophet (sa) said the fast of Ashura was voluntary. To distinguish the Islamic fast of Ashura from that of the Jews, the Prophet (sa) would fast either the day before Ashura or the day after.

HIS RECITATION OF THE HOLY KORAN

Lady Umm Salamah, may Allah be pleased with her, said: "He recited every word separately and distinctly." She also said: "He recited: 'Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds' and paused, then recited, 'the Merciful, the Most Merciful and paused. He paused again after 'Owner of the Day of Recompense.'" When Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, was asked whether

the Prophet (sa) recited softly or audibly, she replied that he recited both ways. One day Umm Hani who lived in Mecca, said she heard the recitation of the Prophet (sa) from the roof-top of her house. Scholars say this was not due a loud voice but rather to the stillness of the night the voice travels further. When he opened Mecca, he rode his camel, Kaswa, reciting the following verses repeatedly:

‟Indeed, We have opened for you (Prophet Muhammad) a clear opening, that Allah forgives your past and future sins, and completes His Favor to you, and guides you on a Straight Path.″ Koran 48.1-2

The companion, Katadah, said that Allah gave each of His prophets a beautiful feature and a beautiful voice, and that our Prophet (sa) had both beautiful features and voice, but he did not recite in a tone similar to that of singers.

HIS WEEPING

As previously explained, everything our beloved Prophet (sa) did was out of humility, sincerity and love of Allah as well as seeking mercy for us. His crying was the same. One day Abdullah, the son of Masood, was asked by the Prophet (sa) to recite some of the Koran to him, whereupon Abdullah asked, "O Messenger of Allah (sa) should I recite it to you when it has been sent down to you?" The Prophet (sa) said, "I love to hear it from another person." So Abdullah started to recite the chapter "Nisa" When he reached the verse 41 ‟How then shall it be when We bring forward from every nation a witness, and bring you (Prophet Muhammad) to witness against those!″ tears flowed from both the Prophet's eyes. Upon the death of one of the Prophet's daughters, Barakah, the longtime maid of the Prophet (sa) who was with him when his mother died, started to weep loudly. The Prophet (sa) drew her attention to it, for uncontrolled weeping is forbidden. Whereupon she said: "Do I not see you crying?" he replied: "That crying is not prohibited, it is a mercy from Allah." Then he said: "A Muslim is at peace at all times, even when his soul is being taken away, he is busy uttering the praise of Allah."

A TASTE OF HIS HUMILITY AND BLESSED CHARACTER

Allah, Himself testifies to the magnitude of the Prophet's character in the chapter "The Pen" verse 4: ‟'Indeed, you are upon a mighty morality." Although our beloved Prophet (sa) was chosen by Allah, the Most High, to be the His greatest prophet he remained a very humble person. He was always ready to visit the sick, attend funerals, ride a donkey. He did not look down upon using a rein woven from palm fiber or sitting upon a saddle made from palm leaves during the hostilities of Krayzah. He would accept invitations, even the invitation of those called slaves. Such was his manner that he would never refer to them as "slaves" but rather as being "youths" and so placated their heart. He never hesitated to accept the invitation of the poor; even when they served bread and old fat as he would neither offend rich or poor. Unlike emperors, kings and leaders, our beloved Prophet disliked it if any one

stood up when he entered. When he entered his house he would divide his time into three portions, one portion for Allah, another for his family, and the other for himself, yet from his own portion he would give half his time to his close companions who would visit him and ask questions, convey messages or requests from others. He taught his close companions things that were beneficial for his entire nation and told them to convey whatsoever he taught them, and encouraged them to ask on behalf of those less able to present their question. He never withheld a reply. He told his companions that whosoever informs a king of the need of another unable to express his need, Allah, the Most High, will keep that person steadfast on the Day of Judgement. He never wasted time listening to gossip, but as a matter of etiquette he would join in the conversation of his companions, no matter if they were speaking about religious or worldly affairs . Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, said that he never hit anyone except in Jihad, nor did he hit women. He respected and honored those who were respected and honored in their nation. He warned them of the punishment of Allah, mediated between people, praised and encouraged good deeds. He explained the harmful effects of bad things, removed and prevented them. He followed the middle course in all matters and never neglected to guide his followers. He was always truthful, and when he spoke to anyone that person felt the most honored. When he was asked for something, he never refused, and when he had nothing to give he would speak with kind words to the asker. He never refused to answer the question of a traveler and would say: "When you see someone in need, help them." One day a needy person went to the Prophet (sa) and asked for something. The Prophet (sa) did not have anything to give him at that time, so he told him to go and purchase whatever he needed and charge it to him. Omar heard the conversation and reminded him that he had already given away everything he possessed and told him that Allah had not made him responsible for that which was beyond his means. Without hesitation, an Ansar spoke up saying "O Messenger of Allah, spend whatever you will, do not fear any decrease from the Lord of the Throne", whereupon the Prophet (sa) smiled and said, "Allah, the Most High, has commanded me to do this." One day Rubayyi, the daughter of Muawwidh brought some fresh dates and small cucumbers to the Prophet (sa). The Prophet (sa) had just been given some jewelry so he gave her either a handful of jewelry or gold. When someone joined him for any reason he would remain seated until that person left. His endearing disposition was not just for a few, but for everyone, he was like a father to them. He never thought it to be beneath him to mend his clothes nor help with the daily chores. He was always kind to children and would ask Allah to bless them. It was not his custom to concern himself with idle conversation nor yet to interrupt when someone was speaking. His gatherings were full of knowledge, modesty, patience and honesty. He neither degraded nor disgraced anyone. If someone had sinned, it was not made public. Little ones were loved, the needy given preference whilst strangers and travelers were cared for. Those in his household loved him dearly, not once did he rebuke them for not having done a certain thing, nor did he ever ask why someone had done such a thing. He never used obscene language, nor did he shout and talk in the bazaars. It was not his way to avenged a bad deed with a similar deed, rather, he would forgive it and it would not be mentioned thereafter. He never sought the faults in anyone. Everyone received their rights, whether they were Muslims or non-Muslims. Even the unbelievers of Mecca testified to his honesty. He was not short-tempered, nor did he humiliate anyone. He was very

appreciative of the blessings of Allah no matter whether they were small or great. He did not criticize his food, nor over-praise it. He never became angered over any materialistic matter. When someone exceeded the limits in religious matters or against the truth, he became angry in a way that no one could endure, and turn away. He either forgave the offender or paid no attention to him. When he was happy, it was as if he almost closed his eyes, as for his laugh, it was, for the most part, a smile in which his blessed front teeth glittered like shining white hailstones. When he gestured towards something he would do so with his hand rather than by just pointing with one finger. The scholars say that this was yet another act of his humility as he would raise one finger as reference to Allah. When he was surprised by something he would turn his hand. He often spoke and used his hands. Sometimes he would hit the palm of his right hand with the underside of his left thumb. As for his modesty, he was more bashful than a virgin behind her veil. Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, said that neither did she see his private parts nor he hers. There was a time when the companions went to the Messenger of Allah (sa) complaining of severe pangs of hunger. They showed him the stones they had strapped against their stomach to prevent it from swelling whereupon the Prophet (sa) showed them the two stones strapped to his. There was also the time when the Prophet (sa) and seven of his companions had nothing to eat except leaves. As a result their mouths became very ulcerated. When a young Jewish boy was taken seriously ill, he went to visit him and through his kindness towards him the boy embraced Islam before he died and saved from the fires of Hell. He even visited the hypocrite Abdullah, the son of Ubay, who had for a long time gone out of his way to try to ridicule the Prophet (sa). There is a beautiful hadith that tells the story of a Jewish rabbi. After the Prophet (sa) migrated to Medina some of the sincere and knowledgeable Jews embraced Islam. Zayd, the son of Sanah was a knowledgeable Jew who awaited the coming of the lasts prophet. Zayd had studied his Scriptures well that detailed the time of the next prophet's appearance together with his characteristics. When the Prophet (sa) arrived in Medina he was able to recognize all but two of the prophesied fine characteristic in the Prophet (sa) and up until that time remained unsure as to his prophethood. The signs were that his gentleness would overcome his anger and that the more foolish a person acted towards him, the more patient he would become. One day as he was with the Prophet (sa) a bedouin came to him in a distressed state telling him that his tribe had embraced Islam, and that he had told them that if they became Muslims they would never again go hungry. Now that drought had stricken his land and food was in very short supply he told the Prophet (sa) he feared they would leave Islam on account of his promise and so he had come to ask the Prophet for his help. Rather than rebuking the man for giving such an unprecedented promise, the Prophet (sa) turned to a companion who informed him that there was nothing left to give. Zayd had been listening intently to the conversation and told the Prophet that he knew of a date palm grove from which he could purchase unripe dates that could be harvested when ripe and that the Prophet could repay him later. In the meantime he gave the bedouin some gold to buy food for his tribe to tide them over until the date harvest, with the instruction to deal fairly with it. Some time later, after the dates had been harvested and given to the bedouin, Zayd went to the Prophet (sa). The Prophet had just returned for attending the funeral of one of his companions and was sitting near a well when Zayd went up to him, tugged at the hem of his robe and chided him for not having repaid his debt and

accused all of Abdul Muttalib's children as being poor payers. Omar happened to be present and jumped to the Prophet's defense saying, "O enemy of Allah, what are you mumbling. I swear by Allah, that if I did not fear, I would have your head severed!" The Prophet (sa) looked up and smiled at Omar and told him, "Omar, this person and I are in need of something more. He should have told me to take care that I fulfill his rights, and should have advised in a better manner when presenting his claim. Go, take him and fulfill his rights, and because he was scolded give him, in compensation, twenty extra measurements of dates as his right. Omar and Zayd went together and as Zayd received his rights he asked, "Why have you given an excess amount of dates?" Omar replied, "The Messenger of Allah (sa) has commanded me to give it to you." Then Zayd asked Omar if he knew who he was and Omar replied that he did not, so he replied: "I am Zayd, the son of Sanah" whereupon Omar inquired, "The learned man of the Jews?" whereupon Zayd told him he was the very same. Then Omar asked him what had caused him to behave in such a bad manner towards the Prophet (sa). He replied, "Two signs from the signs of the prophethood were left which I was not able to examine. The first was the gentleness of the Prophet which overrides his anger. The second was that the more foolishly a person acts towards him the more tolerant he becomes. Now I have examined both, therefore I make you a witness to my acceptance of Islam and give half my wealth to the nation of Prophet Muhammad (sa). Omar and Zayd returned to the Prophet (sa) and Zayd embraced Islam. Later on he became a martyr.

THE DEATH OF THE PROPHET (SA)

At the same time each year, the Prophet (sa) would suffer from the reoccurrence of the poisoned meat he had been given by a Jewess in Khybar. Its reoccurrence in the year in which he passed away was more severe than ever before. His illness began on the day in which he spent in Lady Ayesha's apartment with a headache. A day or so later when he was in the apartment of Lady Maymunah, may Allah be pleased with her, his illness worsened and knowing that he would feel better in the apartment of Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, his wives were happy to have him taken to her apartment and relinquished their rights. Due to the severity of his illness, he was unable to lead his followers in prayer so he appointed Abu Bakr to lead them instead. A few days before he passed away, although it was obvious he was weak from his suffering, he felt a little better and asked to be assisted into the Mosque. When the congregation realized he was amongst them great happiness spread throughout the Mosque as they thought he must be recovering. After having offered his prayer sitting down he was taken back to Lady Ayesha's apartment for the last time. On a Monday, ten or eleven days later, our beloved Prophet (sa) passed away after having dipped his hands in a cup of water that was beside him and wiped them over his blessed face as his head rested upon the either Lady Ayesha's chest or lap. As soon as Abu Bakr learned of his death he made haste to his daughter's apartment, and kissed the blessed forehead. It was the saddest day of all time. The companions did not know where to bury him, some thought it should be in Mecca whilst others thought differently. Then, one of the companions informed them that the Prophet (sa) had told him that a Prophet is buried where he died, and so he was laid to rest in Lady

Ayesha's apartment. The Prophet (sa) left but a few worldly goods behind, one of which was a suit of armor pawned to a Jew, a donkey, and a piece of land which he had said was to be charity and the ring which he used as a seal. When Abu Bakr became caliph the ring was given to him and passed in succession to Othman at which time it was lost. The donkey, pined so much for her master that she threw herself into a well and died.

THE PROPHET'S POSSESSIONS AND CLOTHING HIS BED

Our beloved Prophet (sa) slept upon a firm leather mattress stuffed with the fiber of palm trees. The mattress was so firm that the palm fiber marks left welt marks upon his blessed body when he arose. One night Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, decided to fold the mattress in four so as to make it a little more comfortable. The next morning the Prophet (sa) asked what she had spread out for him that night, so Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, told him what she had done. The Prophet (sa) asked her kindly to return it to how it had been because its softness deprived him from his voluntary prayers -- this was because the softer mattress had caused him to sleep more soundly than when he slept on a hard mattress.

HIS TOOTHBRUSH

The Prophet (sa) cleaned his teeth with the splayed end of a miswaak twig.

HIS NATURAL FRAGRANCE AND USE OF PERFUME

The Messenger of Allah (sa) was blessed with a natural fragrance quite unlike any other in the world. It has been described as being more pleasant than either amber or musk. Such was its sweetness that when he perspired, his wives collected his perspiration and used it to perfume themselves. He recommended the use of perfume to his companions saying, "The perfume of a man is a fragrance that spreads and has less color. The perfume of women has more color and is less fragrant." The scholars explain this to mean that men should wear a heavy fragrance whereas women should use a light fragrance but should avoid wearing it when going out.

HIS CLOTHING

The Prophet (sa) preferred to wear a long cotton gown. Sometimes the sleeves would be long, reaching as far as his wrist, but they never covered his fingers. At other times the sleeves would be shorter, as for the length of the gown he would either wear one that reached to just above his ankles or one that reached halfway down his calf. He did not possess two thowbs at the same time. We are also told that the waist wrap he liked most was one made from printed Yemeni cloth that is reported to be green. His waist wraps would never exceed the length of his ankles. It is also forbidden for a man to wear clothes longer than this. At another time he wore a red garment, however it was a color for him alone to wear because he forbade other

men to wear red garments. As for garments dyed a saffron color, he forbade their wearing, however, if a saffron color garment becomes so very faded that no trace of the color remains, it can be worn, as the Prophet (sa) once wore such a sheet. Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, reported that one day the Prophet (sa) left the house in morning wearing a sheet made of black hair. The Prophet (sa)said "Choose white clothing, as it is the best clothing. White clothing should be worn whilst living, and the dead should be buried in white." During an illness as he was assisted by Anas to leave his apartment he wore a patterned Yemeni shawl. When he received a new garment he would supplicate saying, "O Allah, all praise and thanks to You for clothing me with this. I ask You for the good of it and the good of what it was made for, and I ask Your protection from the evil of it and the evil of what it was made for." Lady Ayesha, may Allah be pleased with her, said: " ... he possessed only one of each, a thowb, body wrap, shoes or any other clothing, he never had two of anything (at one time)."

HIS LEATHER SOCKS

Our beloved Prophet (sa) wore different types of leather socks. One day when he and some of his companions were in a wooded area he took off his leather socks and placed them to one side. After a while he put his right sock on and was about to put on the left one when a crow swooped down, flew away with it and then dropped it. Unobserved by everyone, a snake had found its way into the sock and when the crow dropped the sock the snake fell out. The Messenger of Allah (sa) praised Allah and from that time onward warned that socks should be checked before putting them on. There were occasions when, after the Prophet (sa) had made wudu he put on a pair of leather socks. When the next time for prayer arrived and it was necessary for him to renew his ablution, he did not remove his socks but wiped his damped hands over the top of them.

HIS SHOES

The Prophet (sa) wore sandals with leather soles and two straps. At that time, it was common for sandals to be made without removing the hair of the animal. We are told by Anas, one of his companions, that he had seen his shoes but there was no hair on them. He warned not to wear just one shoe by itself and told his companions to either wear a pair of shoes or none at all.

HIS TURBAN

The Prophet (sa) had two sizes of turbans. One was smaller than the other. The length of material in the smaller of the two was six cubits, whereas the material in the larger one was twelve. (A cubit is the approximate length of the forearm). At the opening of Mecca, the Prophet (sa) was seen wearing a black turban as he entered the City. More often than not, he would wear his turban with the end piece hanging down at the back, however, he would

sometimes wear it with the end piece hang over his right shoulder. He also wore a yellow turban.

HIS RING

The Prophet (sa) had a silver ring with a gem stone from Abyssinia which he used as a seal. There was a time when he did not have a ring. However, when Islam started to spread and he began to send letters of invitation to Islam to the Emperor of Rome, the King of Persia, and so on, he was informed that none of these heads of state would accept a letter unless it bore a seal. The ring was made in either the 6th or 7th year after his migration to Medina. His ring was inscribed on three lines, the first inscription read "Muhammad", the second "Messenger" and the third "Allah". The scholars are of the opinion that he was given several rings, however, he did not wear a ring every day and would remove his ring when praying. When he wore the ring that had the Name of Allah inscribed upon it he would remove it from his finger before going to the toilet. When he wore an ordinary ring he would sometimes wear it on either his right or left hand. Before it was forbidden for a man to wear gold, the Prophet (sa) had a ring made of gold, as did some of his companions. When the injunction came, he said, "I will never wear it again." When the Prophet (sa) passed away, the ring bearing the seal was passed on to Abu Bakr, then subsequently to Omar and then Othman. During the caliphate of Othman, Muaykeeb was entrusted with its safekeeping. One day as Othman and Muaykeeb were sitting by the well of Arees, near the Mosque at Kuba, Muaykeeb handed the ring to Othman however the ring fell from their hands into the well. Othman immediately ordered the well to be searched but to no avail. Water was hauled up for two days but there was no sign of the ring, it had been lost for ever.

HIS SWORD

It was the custom of the Prophet (sa) to name things. He named his sword "Dulfikkar" and its hilt was made from silver. The sword was like those of the tribe of Hanifa who were famous for the sword making skills.

HIS ARMOR

The Prophet (sa) possessed seven suits of armor all of which were given a name: Dhaatul Fadl, Dhaatul Hawaashi, Dhaatul Wishaah, Fiddah, Saghhdiyyah, Tabraa and Kharnag. At the time of the Prophet's death, Dhaatul Fadl was in pawn to a Jew. At the encounter of Uhud, which was a very fierce, he wore two suits of armor, one on top of the other, they were those he named Dhaatul Fudl and Fiddah. He also wore a helmet.

PROPHETIC DATA

The names of the Holy Prophet (sa) Muhammad, Ahmad, [both names are mentioned in the

Holy Koran in 3:144, 33:40, 47:2. 48:39, 61:61] Al Mahi, the one whom Allah uses as an eraser for disbelief. Al Hashir, the one who is resurrected before anyone else. Al Aqib, the last prophet. Al Dahuk, the one who smiles Al Mutawkkil, the one who entrusts Allah with his affairs. Al Fatih, the opener. Al Amin, the trusted. Al Khatim, the seal Al Mustafa, the chosen one. Al Rasul, the Messenger. Al Nabi, the Prophet. Al Ummi, the one did not read or write. Al Kutham, who gathers the attributes of generosity.

THE NAMES OF HIS GRANDMOTHERS

Ummu Habib Burrah Kulabah Hind

THE NAMES OF HIS WET-NURSES

Thuwaybah Halima, daughter of Abdullah Al Sadiya

THE NAMES OF HIS ELEVEN UNCLES

Al Harith, Al Zubair Abu Talib Hamza Abu Lahab Al Ghaydak Al Muqawam Saffar Al Abbas Kutham Hujal

THE NAMES OF HIS PATERNAL AUNTS

Ummu Hakim Burrah Atika Safiyah Arwa Umayma

THE NAMES OF HIS WIVES

Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylid. Khadijah was forty years of age when she married the Prophet (sa). She died ten years after he became a prophet at the age of sixty-five, before the five prayers became obligatory. Just before she was buried, the Prophet (sa) climbed down into her grave. She died in the same year as the Abu Talib, the uncle of the Prophet and the year became known as the Year of Sorrow. The Holy Prophet (sa) did not marry another until after her death. Khadijah was the first to believe in him. With the exception of Abraham, all his sons and daughters were from this marriage. Swaydah, daughter of Zamah Ayesha, daughter of Abu Bakr Al Siddiq Ayesha was the only virgin wife of the Prophet (sa), his other wives were previously married. On Tuesday, Ramadan 17th, 57 Hijra, she passed away at the age of sixty-six and Abu Hurayah led the funeral prayer. Hafsa, daughter of Omar the son of Al Khattab The Holy Prophet (sa) considered divorcing her, but the Angel Gabriel came to him and told him to let her return because she increased her voluntary fasting as well as her voluntary nightly prayers. Umm Salama, daughter of Abi Umayya Umm Habiba, daughter of Abu Sufyan Zaynab, daughter of Jahsh Zaynab, daughter of Khuzaymah Juwayriyah, daughter of Al Harith Safiya, the daughter of Huyay A Jewess who embraced Islam at Khybar Rayhanah, daughter of Zayd Maymunah, daughter of Al Harith, son of Hazn Maryam, the Copt, mother of Abraham

THE SARARI OF THE HOLY PROPHET (sa)

Maryam, the Copt She was sent by Al Muqawqas, head of the Coptic Church in Alexandria, Egypt. Rayhanah, daughter of Zayd

THE MAWALI (SPONSORED BOYS) OF THE HOLY PROPHET (SA)

Aslam Ahmar Osama, son of Zayd Aflah Anasah Ayman, son of Umm Ayman Thawban Dakwan Rafi Rabah Al Aswad Zayd, son of Haritrha Zayd, son of Bawli Sabik Salim Salman Al Farsi Sulaym Said Abu Kandir Shuqram Dumayra, son of Dumayra Ubaudullah, son of Abd Al Ghaffar Fudalah Al Yamani Mahran Midam Nafi Nufay Nubayh Qakid Wardan Hisham Yasar Abu Uthaylah Abu Al Hamra Abu Rafi Abu Al Samh Abu Dumayrah Abu Muwayhabah Abu Wakid

THE MAWALIYAT (THE SPONSORED GIRLS) OF THE HOLY PROPHET (SA)

Umm Ayman Umaymah Khudra Radwa Salma Maymunah, daughter of Saad Maymunah, daughter of Abi Asib Umm Dumayra Umm Ayyash Rukayyah

THE NAMES OF HIS ANIMALS

Horses Al Sakb Al Murtajiz Lizaz Al Tarf Al Ward Al Nahif or Al Lahif Al Yasub Camel Kaswa, it had two other names, Al Adba and Al Jada Mules Al Shahba Al Duldul Donkeys Yafur, a gift from the head of the Coptic church in Egypt. Yazid, the donkey that spoke to the Prophet (sa) at Khybar and told him he was from a long line of donkeys that had carried only prophets.

THE CALLERS TO PRAYER OF THE PROPHET (SA)

Bilal, son of Rabah Amru, son of Ummu Maktun Abu Mahdhurah Al Jumahi

THE SCRIBES OF THE HOLY PROPHET (sa)

Abu Bakr Omar Othman Ali Ubay, son of Ka'b Zayd, son of Thabit (headed of the committee for writing down the Holy Koran during the life time of the Holy Prophet. Abu Bakr and Othman did the same. Muawiyah Hanzala Khalid, son of Said Aban, son of Said Al Ala

THE GUARDS OF THE HOLY PROPHET (SA)

Saad, son of Abi Wakas Saad, Son of Muadh Abbad, son of Bihr Aby Ayyub Al Ansari Shakwan, son of Abd Kays Muhamad, son of Maslamah Bilal When the verse ".... And Allah protects you

from the people.” 5.67 the Prophet (sa) released his guards.

THOSE WHO LOOKED LIKE THE PROPHET (SA)

Jafar, son of Abu Talib Hasan, son of Ali Quthan, son of Abbas Abu Sufyan, son of Abid Muslim, son of Muattib Kabis, son of Rabia who was from Iraq from the children of Sama. Such was his likeness that when Anas, son of Malik saw him he would cry, and Muawiya would give him gifts and kiss him between his eye because of his likeness.

CONCLUDING SUPPLICATION

extracted from Koran, Burda and Delayl

“We did not send a Messenger except that he should be obeyed, by the permission of Allah. If, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked Allah for forgiveness and the Messenger had asked for forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah, the Turner, the Most Merciful. But no, by your Lord, they will not believe you until they make you the judge regarding the disagreement between them, then, they will not find in themselves any discomfort concerning your verdict, and will surrender to you in full submission.” Koran 4.64-65

“Allah and His angels praise and venerate the Prophet. Believers praise and venerate him and pronounce peace upon him In abundance.” Koran 33.56

All those blessed to see Prophet Muhammad, (sa) could only describe his noble, blessed features by saying: "I have not seen anyone like the Messenger of Allah (sa) neither before nor after him." Therefore, it is impossible for us in this day and age to comprehend the magnitude of his beauty, either physically or inwardly. Imam Al Busairi wrote in his poem “The Cloak” “Can the reality of him be comprehended in this world? A sleeping nation whose description of him is (like the interpretation of) a dream, so the ultimate depth of (our) knowledge concerning him, is that he is a man. In truth, he is the sun of virtue (and) they (the other prophets) are its stars, that only display their light to people in the dark, until when the sun rose his light was spread universally and gave life to all nations. How noble are the physical qualities of Prophet Muhammad (sa), adorned with such an excellent character, who was vested with beauty and distinguished by a pleasant temperament. He is like a blooming flower in its freshness, and the splendor of the full moon, and the ocean in generosity and time; its fearless courage, when alone, it appears because of his grandeur as though he is in the midst of a large army with its retinue. It is like a pearl well preserved in an oyster from the two mines - his speech and smiles. No perfume equals the dust that touches his body. Glad tidings be to the person who smells it (the dust) and kisses it!” It is more than apparent that by attempting to mirror the ways of Prophet Muhammad (sa) there are tremendous blessings with happiness and a rich reward not only in this life but in the Everlasting Life.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

O Allah, we have believed in him, may Allah praise and venerate him and grant him perfect peace, without seeing him, so let us enjoy, O Allah, a vision of him in the two realms and keep our hearts always in love with him. Ameen. We ask Allah to forgive and accept our humble effort and conclude with His Words.

"To Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Allah has power over all things. Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for those with minds. Those who remember Allah when standing, sitting, and on their sides, and contemplate upon the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying:) 'Lord, You have not created these in falsehood. Exaltations to You! Guard us against the punishment of the Fire. Our Lord, whomsoever You admit into the Fire You will have abased and the harmdoers shall have no helpers. Our Lord, we have heard the caller calling to belief, 'Believe in your Lord!' So we believe. Our Lord, forgive us our sins and acquit us of our evil deeds, and take us to You in death with righteousness. Our Lord, give us what You promised us by Your Messengers, and do not abase us on the Day of Resurrection. You do not break Your promise.' and indeed their Lord answers them: 'I do not waste the labor of any that labors among you, male or female you are from each other. And those who emigrated, and were expelled from their houses, those who suffered hurt in My way, and fought, and were killed those I shall surely acquit of their evil deeds, and I shall admit them to Gardens underneath which rivers flow. A reward from Allah and Allah, with Him is the best reward. Do not let the coming and going in the land of those who disbelieve delude you; a little enjoyment, then, their shelter is in Gehenna (Hell), an evil cradling.

But those who fear their Lord, for them shall be Gardens underneath which rivers flow, there they shall live for ever, a (goodly) hosting from Allah, and that which is with Allah is better for the righteous. Koran 3:189-198

Ameen